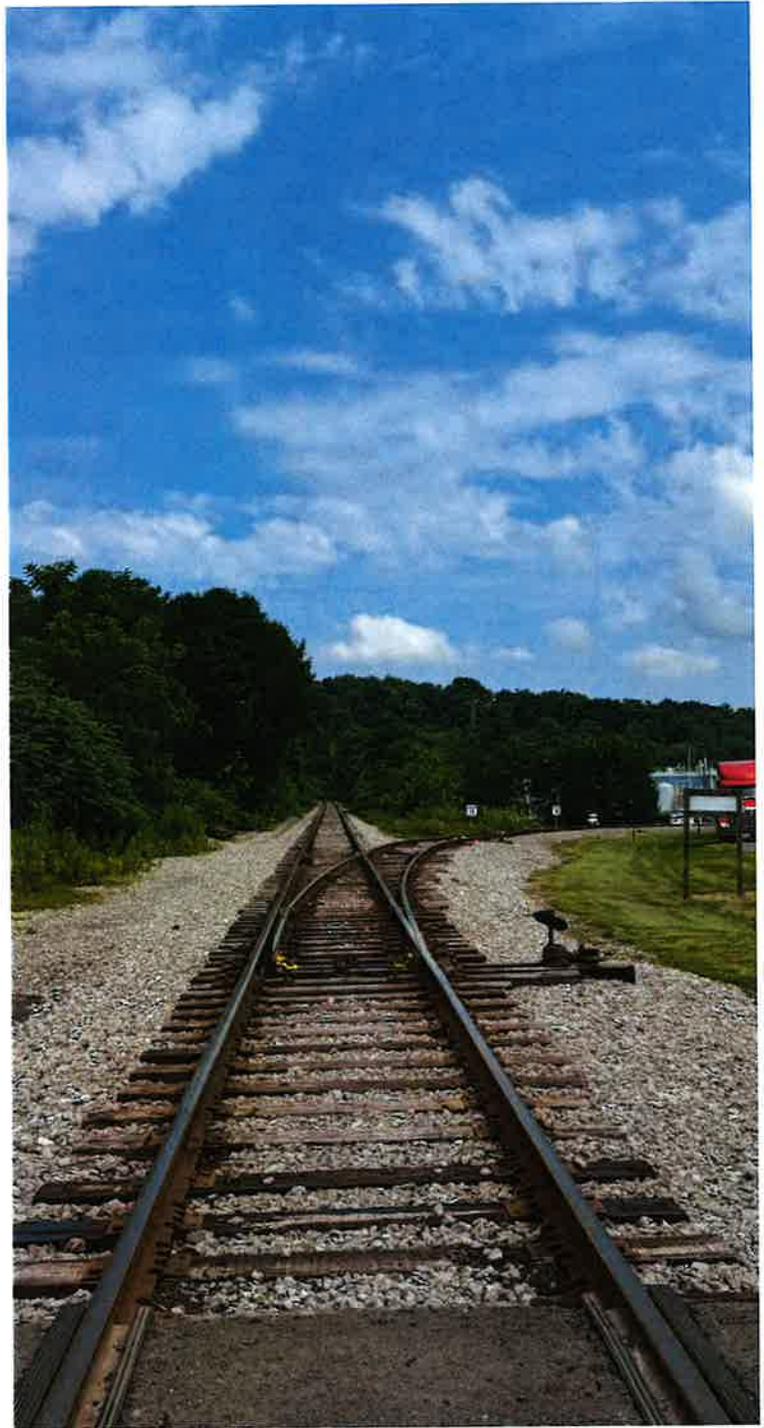# TRI-TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Franklin Township
Beaver County, PA · Est. 1850

Marion Township
Beaver County, Pennsylvania · est. 1845

North Sewickley Township
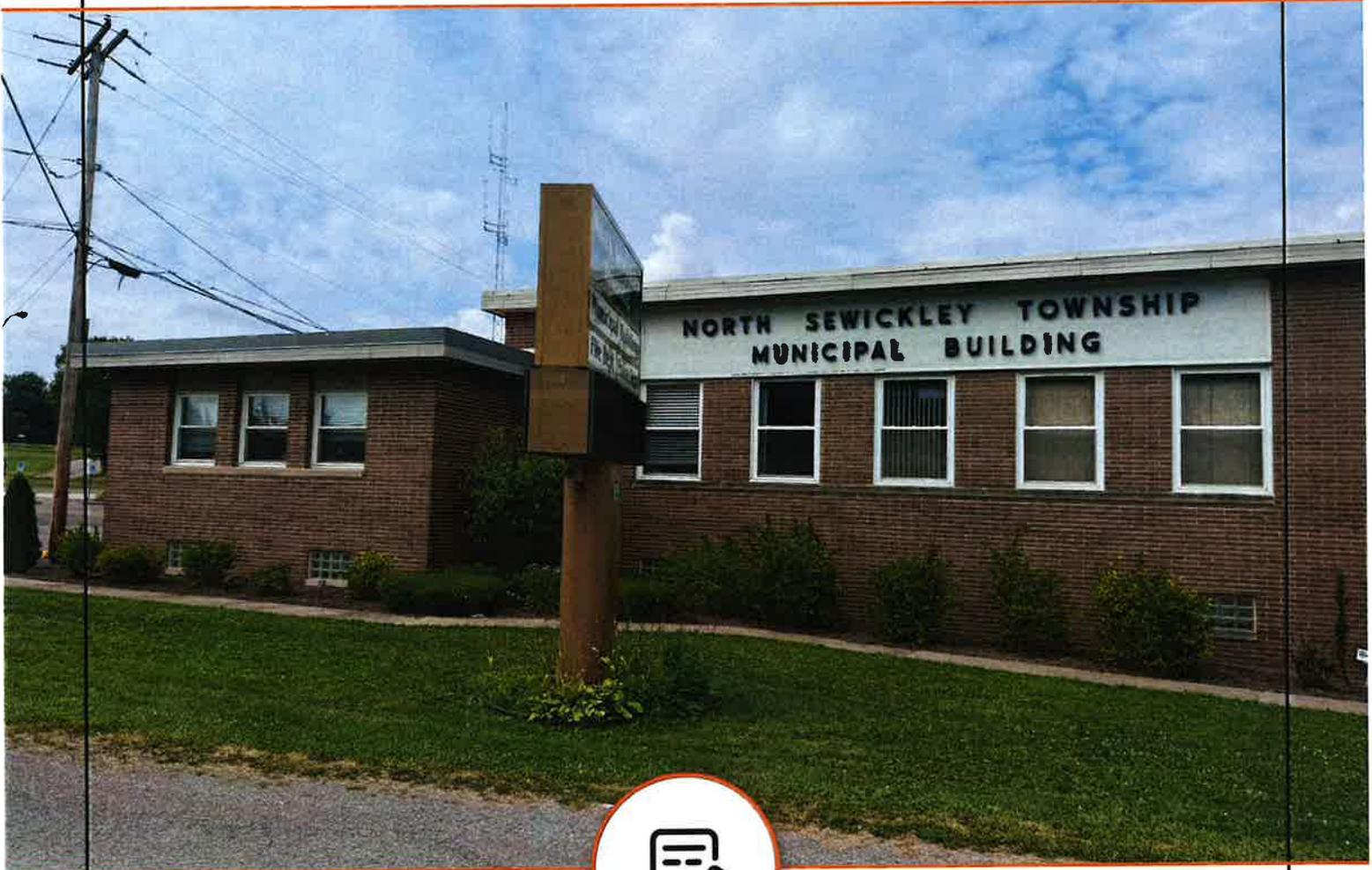
UPDATE **2025**

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EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

The Tri-Township Comprehensive Plan provides a coordinated 20-year vision that is essential in guiding the growth, development, and preservation across Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley Townships located in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. This comprehensive plan aims to highlight and accomplish five key values for community improvement in the targeted townships. The townships' main goals include:

- Foster collaboration between the municipalities and strengthen community support
- Highlight community identity through historic preservation
- Preserve rural character and maintain open space
- Encourage purposeful development that leads to long-term growth
- Increase connectivity and quality of life by valuing natural landscapes, public spaces, and walkability

Input from the local community and stakeholders were important in identifying these core values through surveys, workshops, and community events held between April and September 2025. Community consensus emphasized the need for the preservation of the rural character of the region, adjustment for diverse transportation needs, and management of anticipated population growth. This plan reflects those values and supports community needs by addressing zoning ordinances, transportation improvements, and sustainable practices to encourage economic growth.

Successful implementation of the provided strategies will depend on ongoing collaboration between municipalities, necessary zoning updates, and pursuing grant funding. This plan positions Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley as distinct yet interconnected communities working together toward a shared vision of a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future infor the Tri-Township region.

KEY THEMES & PRIORITIES

1 Rural Character and Open Space

2 Balanced and Strategic Growth

3 Community Roots and Family Life

4 Historic Preservation and Pride

5 Recreation, Connectivity, and Well-Being

WHAT SHAPED THIS PLAN?
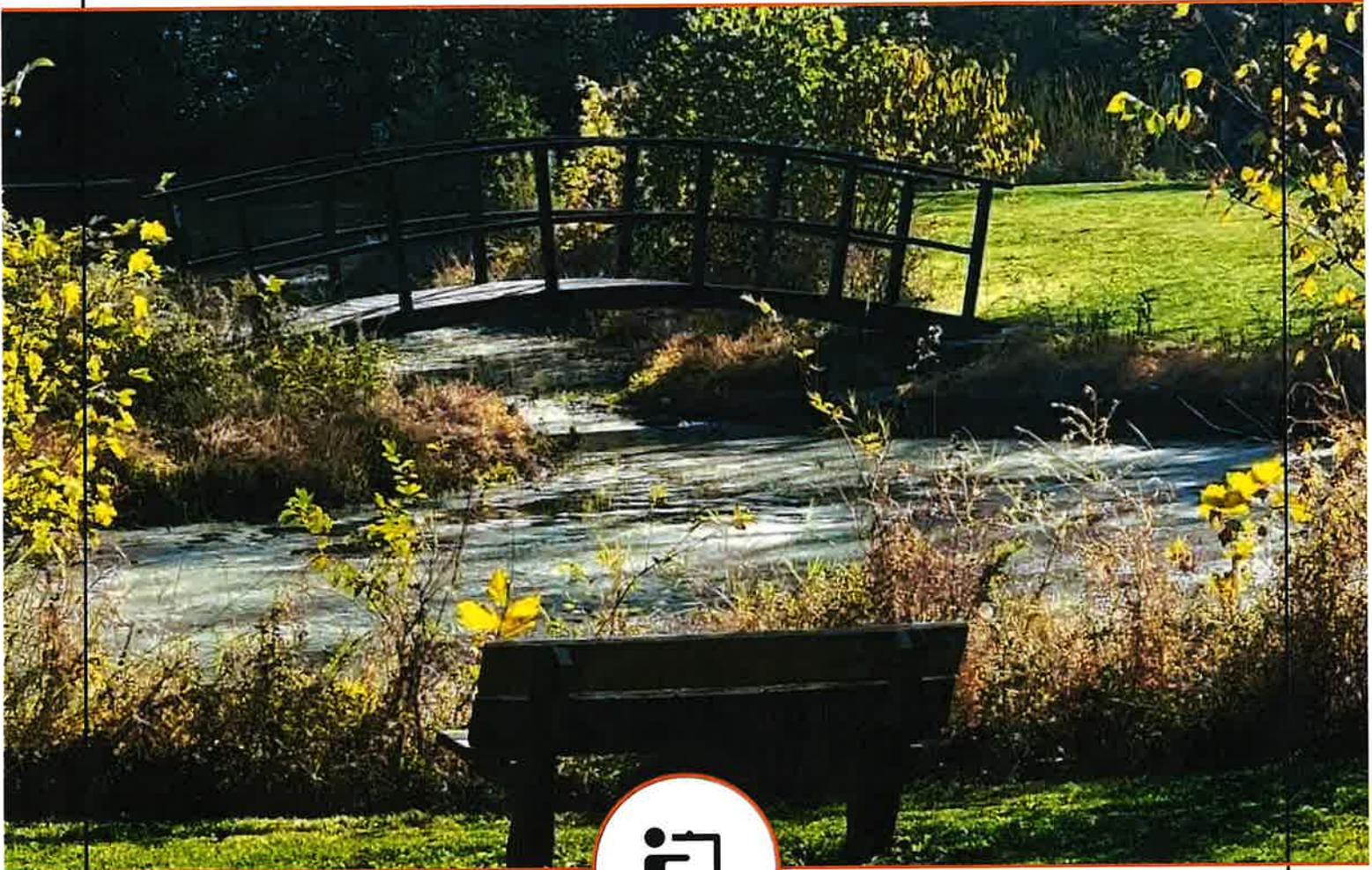
Online Surveys

Existing Conditions Analysis

Community Workshops

Stakeholders Meetings

Community Events

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Located nearly 35 miles from Pittsburgh, these townships are characterized by their rural landscapes, tight-knit communities, and agricultural traditions. North Sewickley Township makes up the western portion of the Tri-Township, located east of the Beaver River. It is intersected by major roads such as Interstate 76 and Pennsylvania Route 65. Marion Township is located east of North Sewickley Township and lies northeast of Interstate 76. Franklin Township sits above North Sewickley Township and Marion Township, and is located northwest of Zelienople Borough.

These three municipalities serve as a transitional zone between the growing metropolitan regions to the south and the largely agricultural areas to the north. They share a common interest in preserving the area's rural character while guiding thoughtful and sustainable development. Commonalities between workforce, infrastructure, and environment shape the futures of each township, even as they maintain their own unique identities.

The Tri-Township Comprehensive Plan is a collaborative approach to planning for long-term economic growth and community preservation. By coordinating decisions, the townships can address regional challenges such as population change, infrastructure maintenance, and environmental management. This plan provides a policy framework to guide development, protect community interests, and direct investment for the most significant impact.

As accommodation for growth continues, careful planning is essential to preserving the small-town character of the townships while supporting development and infrastructure improvements. The Tri-Township Comprehensive Plan builds upon shared goals of fostering economic vitality, enhancing connectivity, promoting sustainability, and enriching community life. It serves as a shared roadmap, reflecting community values, guiding investment, and preparing Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley Townships to thrive as a resilient, connected, and forward-thinking rural region. The chapters that follow outline the plan's core components providing a framework for coordinated and long-term success.
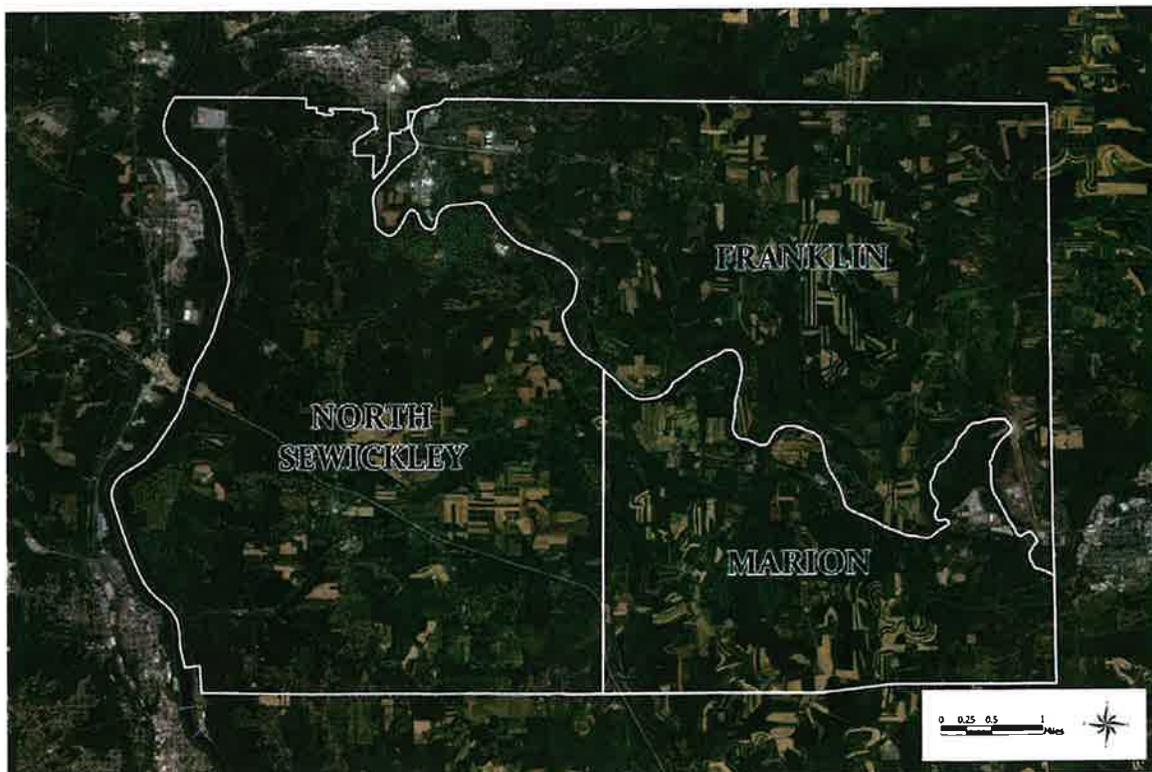
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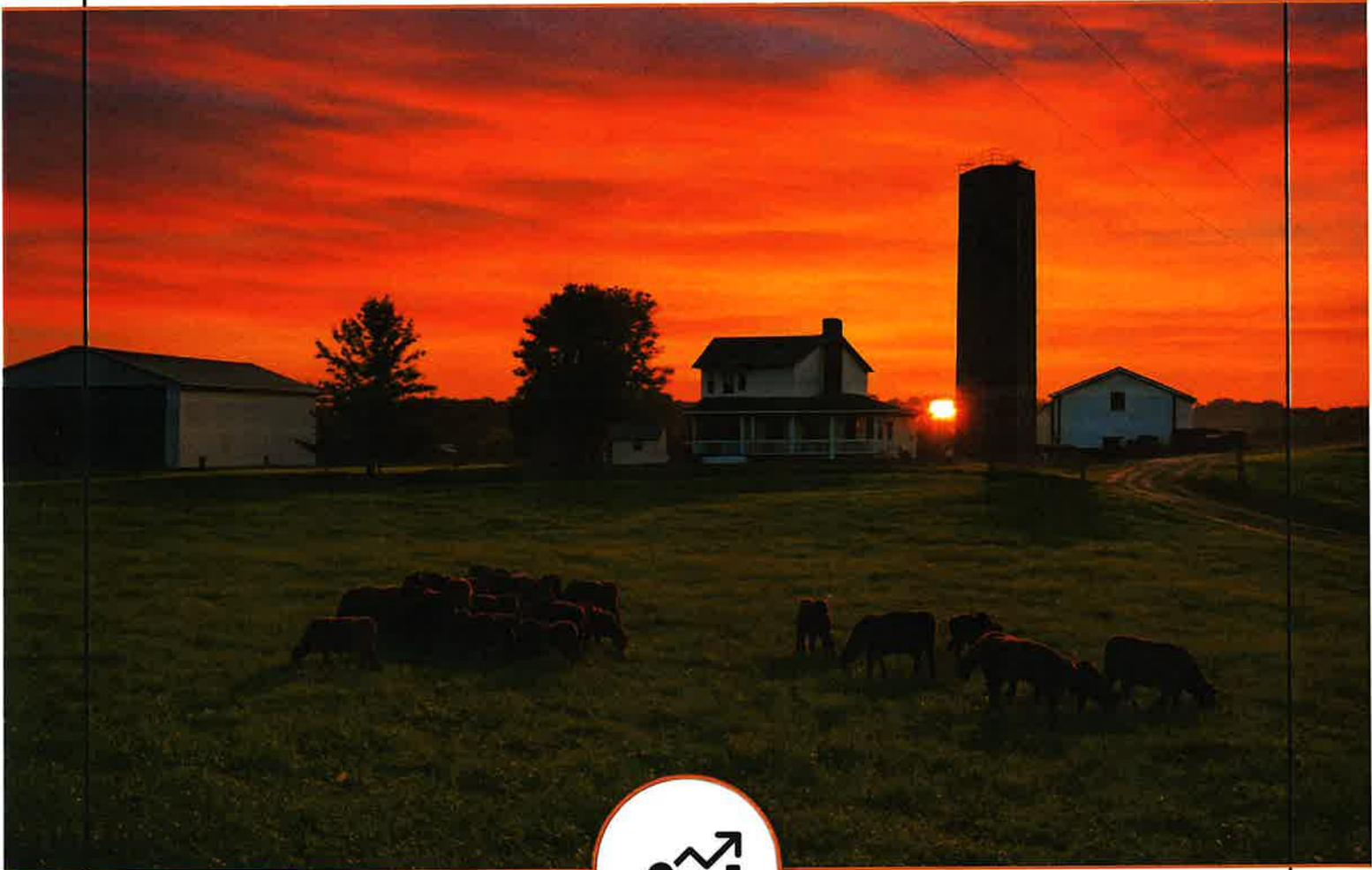
EXISTING CONDITIONS
ANALYSIS

EXISTING CONDITIONS
ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics

Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley's population has been on a slow decline over the past five census periods, declining from a total population of 11,471 in 1980 to 10,181 in 2020, representing an average yearly loss of -0.3% within a span of 40 years.

Population Growth Comparison (1980 - 2020)

Figure 1: Population Growth Comparison
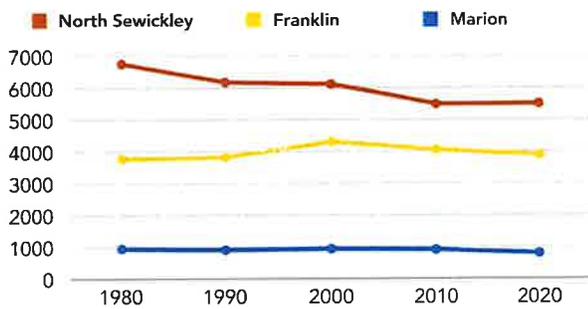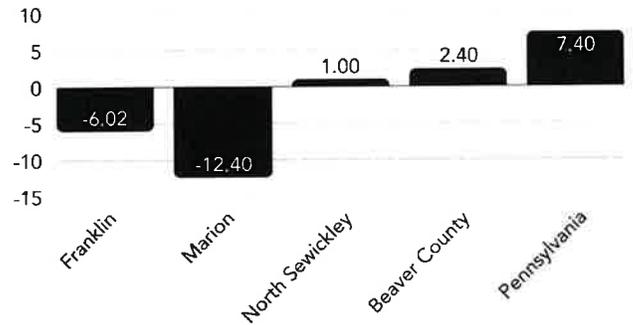
Broader Population Trend
2010 - 2020 (Census)

Age Distribution Comparison
ACS 2022
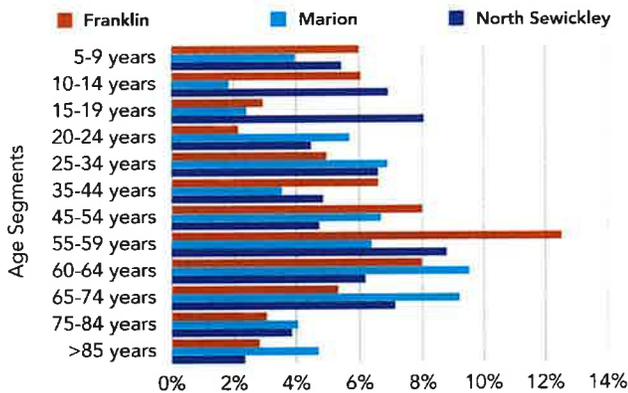
Figure 1: Tri-Township's Age Distribution

Median Age Comparison
ACS 2022
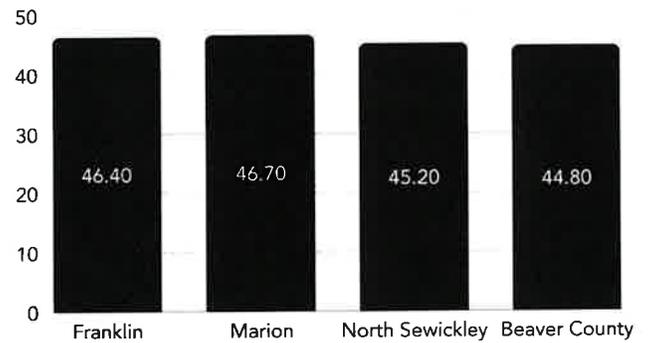
Figure 1: Median Age Comparison

Educational Attainment Comparison (2024)
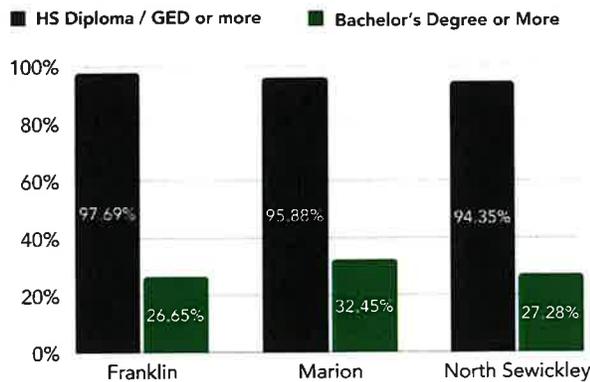
Figure 1: Tri-Township's Educational Attainment

Poverty Rate Comparison (2024)
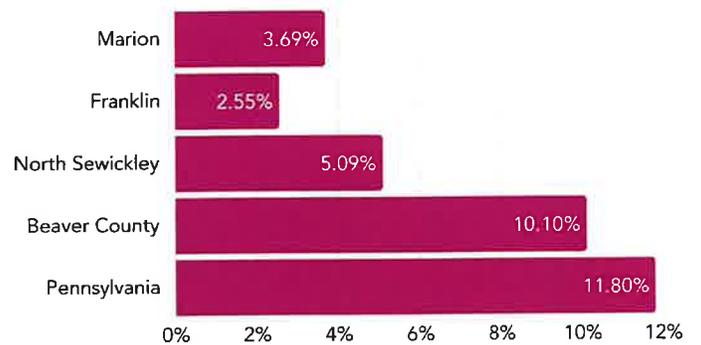
Figure 1: Poverty Rate Comparison

EXISTING CONDITIONS
ANALYSIS

Housing Characteristics

The Tri-Township area has a predominantly owner-occupied housing market, reflecting stable, long-term residency. Home values are highest in Marion and Franklin, indicating stronger demand or newer housing stock, while North Sewickley remains more affordable. Rental options are limited across all three townships, and low vacancy rates suggest a tight housing market with little available inventory.

Household Income Comparison
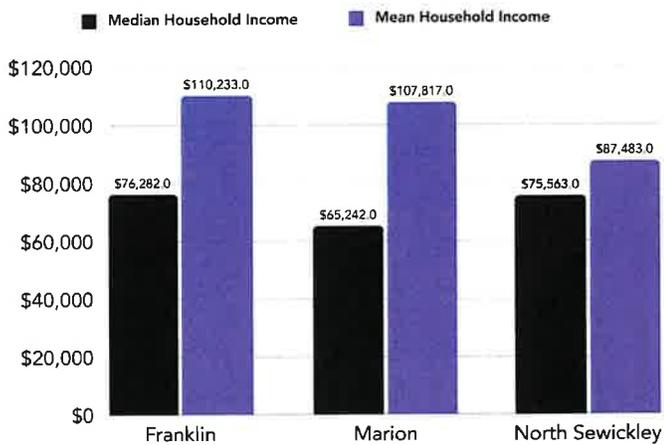
Figure 1: Household Income Comparison

Home Value Comparison
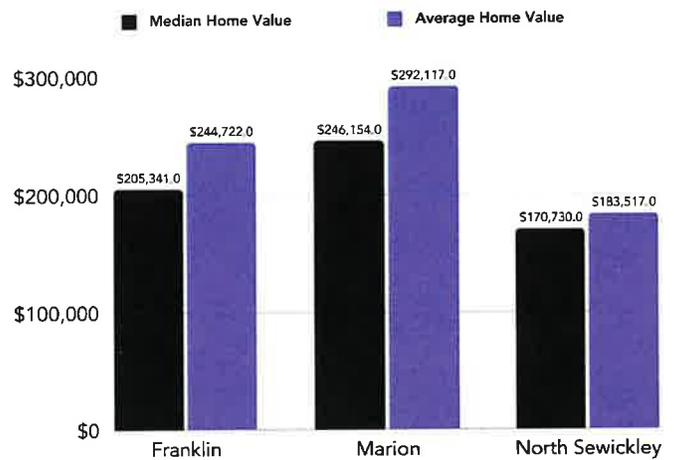
Housing Status Comparison
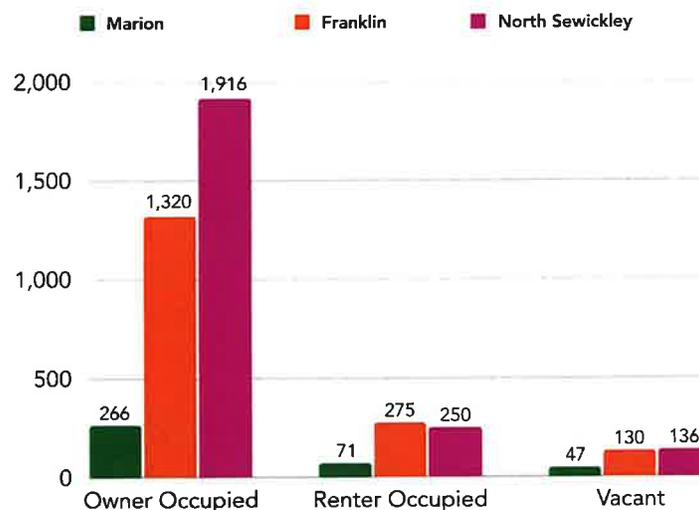
Housing in the Tri-Township area is predominantly owner-occupied, with North Sewickley having the largest number of owner-occupied units (1,916), followed by Franklin (1,320) and Marion (266). Renter-occupied units are relatively limited across all three, and vacancy levels are low, indicating a stable and settled housing market with limited rental availability.

TRI-TOWNSHIP REGION
SWOT ANALYSIS

The following sections provide a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) analysis of the overall Tri-Township region as well as the individual townships. This analysis highlights the shared strengths and challenges across the region, while also addressing unique opportunities and concerns within each township.

STRENGTHS

- **Cohesive Rural Identity** - The three townships share a common identity rooted in agricultural heritage, low-density development, and scenic landscapes. This cohesion presents a rare opportunity to brand the area with a unified rural character that's both authentic and desirable.
- **Geographic and Economic Positioning** - Collectively, the area is well-positioned near key transportation corridors, regional job centers, and small-city amenities, allowing residents to access urban benefits while preserving a rural lifestyle.
- **Community Resilience** - The deep-rooted, multigenerational population across all three townships reflects a stable community base that has local knowledge and demonstrates consistent civic engagement.
- **High Quality of Life with Low Overhead** - The cost of living is comparatively low, schools are well-regarded, and residents enjoy space and privacy. These factors contribute to a strong baseline quality of life without relying on large municipal budgets.

WEAKNESSES

- **Fragmented Planning Capacity** - While the townships face similar challenges, coordination across jurisdictions is limited. This fragmentation can lead to duplicated efforts, missed funding opportunities, and inconsistent policies.
- **Lack of Destination-Defining Assets** - The area currently lacks a defining destination or economic anchor, such as a regional park, college, or major employer, that could generate tourism, investment, or regional recognition.
- **Uneven Infrastructure Readiness** - Differences in broadband access, road maintenance, and public utilities across township lines hinder region-wide growth strategies and make it harder to plan for new development.
- **Underleveraged Community Voices** - Residents have strong opinions and a deep sense of place, however there are few formal structures to translate that energy into ongoing, organized community development efforts.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Joint Investment in Public Amenities** - The development of shared recreational facilities, trail systems, or community centers could serve all three townships and build regional identity while spreading costs.
- **Coordinated Land Use Strategy** - Adopting a regional approach to land preservation, housing, and growth areas can help each township meet its goals while reducing conflicts along shared borders.
- **Unified Economic Development Framework** - Together, the townships could establish a rural enterprise zone, co-market to small businesses, or apply for grant funding as a single, cohesive region rather than isolated communities.
- **Storytelling and Branding** - The agricultural roots, scenic qualities, and small-town values of the area could be packaged into a regional identity that draws in visitors, new residents, and heritage tourism.

THREATS

- **Competitive Disadvantage without Collaboration** - Neighboring municipalities with stronger coordination may attract investment or infrastructure funding more easily, leaving the Tri-Township area at a disadvantage.
- **Policy Misalignment** - Without shared land use goals, one township's development choices could conflict with another's, leading to long-term tensions and inefficiencies.
- **Demographic and Economic Drift** - Without strategic intervention, the area could see continued population aging, decline in household size, and economic stagnation as younger residents seek more connected or amenity-rich areas.
- **Environmental Fragmentation** - Unmanaged and scattered development across township lines could erode farmland, strain stormwater systems, and disrupt habitat connectivity across what is now a largely-intact, rural landscape.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- **Rural Character and Open Space** - A defining strength of Franklin Township is its rural atmosphere and abundant open space, which are highly valued by residents and central to its identity.
- **Strong Community Roots -** The Township benefits from a population that has deep ties to the area, with a significant number being long-term residents or families or having returned due to familiarity.
- **School System -** The local school system is frequently cited as a major reason families choose to live in the area, coinciding with the Township's strong educational foundation.
- **Housing Affordability -** Relative affordability remains an asset, helping to attract and retain residents who might be priced out of nearby municipalities.

WEAKNESSES

- **Limited Recreational and Cultural Amenities** - Few residents identified strong recreational or cultural activities within the Township, indicating a lack of accessible, local offerings.
- **Lack of Housing Variety -** Minimal support for more diverse housing options suggests that the current housing stock may not meet the needs of all household types, particularly younger residents and older adults.
- **Modest Economic Base -** Franklin Township's small employment base and minimal strategy for attracting new businesses may limit local job opportunities and hinder economic growth.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Historic Preservation Programs -** Support for tax incentives, zoning protections, and partnerships helps preserve local historic resources, offering potential for cultural and tourism-based development.
- **Economic Development -** Interest in attracting new industries and employers, presents an opportunity to diversify the economy and grow the tax base.
- **Community Engagement -** Educational programs and events could foster civic pride and better connect residents, especially in a rural environment.

THREATS

- **Development Pressure -** The Township's rural character and open space may face increasing pressure from development, particularly if nearby urban areas grow and housing demand increases.
- **Demographic Shifts -** If younger households continue to prefer areas with more amenities or diverse housing types, Franklin could experience population stagnation or decline.
- **Lack of Local Infrastructure for Growth -** Without targeted planning and investment, the Township may struggle to support or manage new development in a way that aligns with community values.

MARION TOWNSHIP
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- **Rural and Scenic Character** - Residents overwhelmingly value Marion Township's rural setting, open space, and farmland. This identity is central to both the current quality of life and future planning priorities.
- **Long-Term Residency and Family Ties** - A significant number of residents have deep generational ties to the land, contributing to strong community cohesion and a desire for stewardship.
- **Perceived Affordability and Quietness** - Marion is seen as a quiet, affordable place to live, with enough land availability for custom or family-related development.
- **Civic Interest in Historic Preservation** - Support for zoning protections, tax incentives, and partnerships reflects a local interest in preserving historic character and cultural heritage.

WEAKNESSES

- **Limited Housing Variety** - A lack of more diverse housing options may reflect that the current housing stock does not support seniors, first-time buyers, or changing household needs.
- **Lack of Civic Infrastructure** - Few residents noted pedestrian or recreational connectivity, suggesting a limited network of amenities that support daily activity or community interaction.
- **Small Economic Footprint** - Very little support was expressed for expanding industry or employment opportunities, which could point to low expectations for future economic growth.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Strengthening Historic Preservation Tools** - Residents appear open to programs that incentivize or regulate historic preservation which could become foundational policies within the planning efforts for the Township.
- **Community Events and Education** - Moderate support for local programming and cultural events provides a path for enhancing civic life without major infrastructure costs.
- **Targeted Housing Strategy** - The Township has an opportunity to expand housing options incrementally to serve evolving resident needs without compromising rural character.

THREATS

- **Development Pressure and Land Fragmentation** - As surrounding areas grow, development could erode farmland and diminish the Township's rural qualities if not managed proactively.
- **Aging Population and Limited Amenities** - Without diversification in housing types or expanded services, the Township may struggle to retain or attract younger residents and families.
- **Limited Economic Resilience** - A narrow employment base and modest appetite for growth may hinder the Township's ability to adapt to regional economic shifts.

NORTH SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- **Rural Quality of Life with Regional Access -** Residents value North Sewickley's quiet, rural setting while recognizing its convenient access to highways and nearby urban centers which is an attractive balance for families and commuters.
- **Open Space and Farmland -** The abundance of open land is highly appreciated and serves as a key feature of the community's identity and land use strategy.
- **Strong School System -** The local school district is frequently mentioned as a reason for living in the Township, reinforcing its appeal to families with children.
- **Community Involvement in Preservation -** Broad support exists for historic preservation tools, such as zoning protections, tax incentives, and partnerships, indicating a shared value in maintaining community character.

WEAKNESSES

- **Limited Housing Diversity -** The current housing stock may not adequately serve the full range of household types, particularly seniors, young professionals, and smaller households.
- **Underdeveloped Recreational Amenities -** While residents value the rural setting, the Township lacks robust recreational amenities or cultural infrastructure, which may limit quality of life and opportunities for youth engagement.
- **Minimal Economic Development Infrastructure -** Few residents prioritized business attraction, suggesting economic development may be under-emphasized or under-resourced.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Strategic Preservation and Tourism -** Leveraging interest in historic preservation could support place-based tourism and community pride initiatives with minimal disruption to the rural environment.
- **Expanded Programming and Events -** Significant interest in cultural programming, events, and partnerships, present low-cost ways to build community cohesion and increase visibility within the region.
- **Targeted Economic Development -** Although economic development is not a top priority among residents, the Township could still benefit from selectively attracting small businesses and home-based enterprises that align with its rural character and help expand local opportunities.

THREATS

- **Suburbanization Pressures -** As regional development continues, North Sewickley may face scattered growth that undermines its rural character unless policies are addressed to thoughtfully guide development.
- **Youth and Workforce Retention -** Without diverse housing, job opportunities, or recreational amenities, the Township may struggle to retain younger residents and attract new families.
- **Infrastructure Gaps -** The absence of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure may become more noticeable as the population grows and residents demand improved local connectivity.

PUBLIC INPUT
SYNOPSIS

Public Input Synopsis

Public participation was central to the development of the Tri-Township Comprehensive Plan. The process was designed to ensure that residents, business owners, and local organizations in Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley had meaningful opportunities to shape the plan's vision and recommendations. A combination of surveys, workshops, and community events were used to capture diverse perspectives and build consensus on shared priorities. The following list outlines the community engagement methods used throughout the process from April to September 2025.
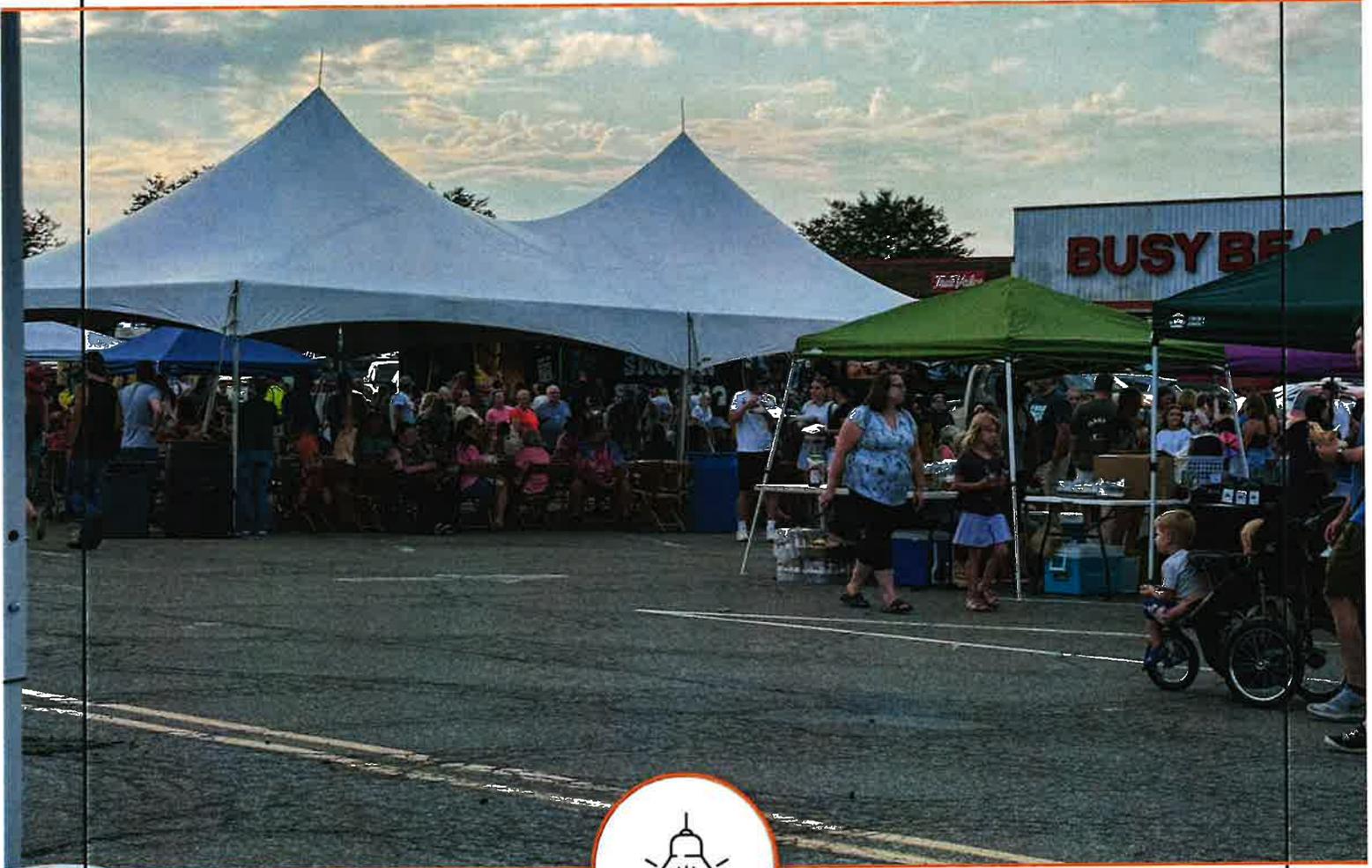

| Online Surveys | Stakeholder Meetings | Existing Conditions Analysis | Community Events | Community Workshops |

PUBLIC INPUT
OPPORTUNITY

Project Website	A dedicated online hub providing project updates, hosted surveys, and shared draft materials, ensuring transparent communication and year-round accessibility for residents.
Stakeholder SWOT Sessions	Virtual discussions with business owners, civic leaders, and institutional partners identified key strengths such as community cohesion, agricultural assets, and proximity to regional job centers, as well as challenges related to infrastructure and growth management.
Vision and Objectives Survey	Over Spring 2025, residents shared their priorities for the future, highlighting the desire to balance development with farmland preservation and improving connectivity, safety, and recreation access across township lines.
Conceptual Goals Workshops	Held at the Franklin and North Sewickley fire halls, these sessions gathered direct community input on preliminary goals and strategies, building early consensus among residents and officials.
Community Events	Each township hosted a booth at summer gatherings such as *National Night Out* and local municipal days, where residents provided informal feedback on draft goals and identified issues that heavily affected daily life.
Recommendations Survey	A follow-up survey conducted in September validated earlier findings and refined policy directions, with participants generally supporting growth management, infrastructure coordination, and rural preservation efforts.
Town Hall Meeting	The culminating event in late September presented the near-final draft plan, allowing residents to ask questions, suggest refinements, and preview implementation strategies before the plan entered formal review.

Key Takeaways

- A desire to preserve rural character and farmland as new growth occurs.
- The need for safe, well-maintained roads and improved multimodal connections.
- Interest in coordinated economic development, especially near the Zelienople Municipal Airport and key corridors.
- Support for trail expansion, park access, and community gathering spaces.
- Emphasis on collaboration among townships to manage growth efficiently and maintain shared services.

VISION & VALUES

VISION & VALUES
PROCESS

ENGAGEMENT

Online Surveys

Existing Conditions Analysis

Community Workshops

Stakeholders' Meetings

Community Tours

THEMES

1 — Rural Character & Open Space

2 — Balanced & Strategic Growth

3 — Community Roots & Family Life

4 — Historic Preservation & Pride

5 — Recreation, Connectivity, & Well-Being

PRINCIPLES

Preserve farmland, woodlands, & scenic corridors that define the area's rural identity.

Direct growth to areas with existing infrastructure & road access to reduce sprawl.

Support housing options that allow families & lifelong residents to remain in the community.

Protect & reinvest in historic buildings, landmarks, & landscapes that reflect township heritage.

Expand access to parks, trails, & riverfront areas that connect residents to nature.

Guide new development to complement open landscapes and existing settlements.

Encourage mixed-use & appropriately scaled development that fits local context.

Strengthen civic engagement, volunteerism, & intergenerational connections.

Encourage adaptive reuse & reinvestment in older structures to maintain character.

Improve transportation & multimodal routes linking neighborhoods & community spaces.

Promote conservation practices that protect agricultural uses.

Coordinate land use policies across townships to ensure compatibility & long-term efficiency.

Promote safe, welcoming neighborhoods anchored by schools, churches, & community gathering places.

Celebrate local history through signage, events, & partnerships with preservation organizations.

Promote public health through recreation, outdoor activity, & shared public spaces.

CORE THEMES

Rural Character & Open Space

Residents are protective of preserving farmland, woodlands, and open views ensuring the area's beauty and heritage remain defining strengths.

Balanced & Strategic Growth

Residents appreciate growth that supports community character and existing infrastructure, allowing for economic and residential expansion without sacrificing open space or small-town scale.

Community Roots & Family

Residents value close relationships, strong families, and civic involvement and reinforcing these roots keeps the community welcoming and family-oriented.

Historic Preservation & Pride

Residents support new development that reflects the area's history, ensuring the past remains visible in the region's future.

Recreation, Connectivity & Well-Being

Residents desire strengthened connections between neighborhoods, schools, and natural areas to create a more active and accessible region.

COMPLIANCE

Per Pennsylvania Code 1968 Act 247 Article III, the Tri Township Comprehensive Plan must include the following elements:

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Element	2010 Joint Comprehensive Plan	2025 Comprehensive Plan Update
(a) The municipal, multi-municipal or county comprehensive plan, consisting of maps, charts and textual matter, shall include, but need not be limited to, the following related basic elements:		
(1) A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development, that may also serve as a statement of community development objectives as provided in section 606.	X	X
(2) A plan for land use, which may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, business, agriculture, major traffic and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural lands, flood plains, and other areas of special hazards and other similar uses.	X	X
(2.1) A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.	X	X
(3) A plan for movement of people and goods, which may include expressways, highways, local street systems, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems, public transit routes, terminals, airfields, port facilities, railroad facilities, and other similar facilities or uses.	X	X
(4) A plan for community facilities and utilities, which may include public and private education, recreation, municipal buildings, fire and police stations, libraries, hospitals, water supply and distribution, sewage and waste treatment, solid waste management, storm drainage, and floodplain management, utility corridors and associated facilities, and other similar facilities or uses.	X	X
(4.1) A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.	X	X
(4.2) A discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies, which may include implications for capital improvements programming, new or updated development regulations, and identification of public funds potentially available.	X	X
(5) A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan.	X	X

Element	2010 Joint Comprehensive Plan	2025 Comprehensive Plan Update
(6) A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources to the extent not preempted by Federal or State law. This clause includes, but is not limited to, wetlands and aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, flood plains, unique natural areas, and historic sites.	X	X
(7) In addition to any other requirements of this act, a county comprehensive plan shall:	X	X
(i) Identify land uses as they relate to important natural resources and appropriate utilization of existing minerals.	X	X
(ii) Identify current and proposed land uses which have a regional impact and significance, such as large shopping centers, major industrial parks, mines and related activities, office parks, storage facilities, large residential developments, regional entertainment and recreational complexes, hospitals, airports, and port facilities.	X	X
(iii) Identify a plan for the preservation and enhancement of prime agricultural land and encourage the compatibility of land use regulation with existing agricultural operations.	X	X
(iv) Identify a plan for historic preservation.	X	X
(4.2) A discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies, which may include implications for capital improvements programming, new or updated development regulations, and identification of public funds potentially available.	X	X
(5) A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan.	X	X
(b) The comprehensive plan shall include a plan for the reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resources availability, uses and limitations, including provisions adequate to protect water supply sources. Any such plan shall be generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by a river basin commission. It shall also contain a statement recognizing that:		
(1) Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals may 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.	X	X
(2) Commercial agriculture production may impact water supply sources.	X	X
(c) The municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan shall be reviewed at least every ten years. The municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan shall be sent to the governing bodies of contiguous municipalities for review and comment and shall also be sent to the Center for Local Government Services for informational purposes. The municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan shall also be sent to the county planning commissions or, upon request of a county planning commission, a regional planning commission when the comprehensive plan is updated or at ten-year intervals, whichever comes first, for review and comment on whether the municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan remains generally consistent with the county comprehensive plan and to indicate where the local plan may deviate from the county comprehensive plan.	X	X
(d) The municipal, multi-municipal or county comprehensive plan may identify those areas where growth and development will occur so that a full range of public infrastructure services, including sewer, water, highways, police and fire protection, public schools, parks, open space, and other services can be adequately planned and provided as needed to accommodate growth.	X	X

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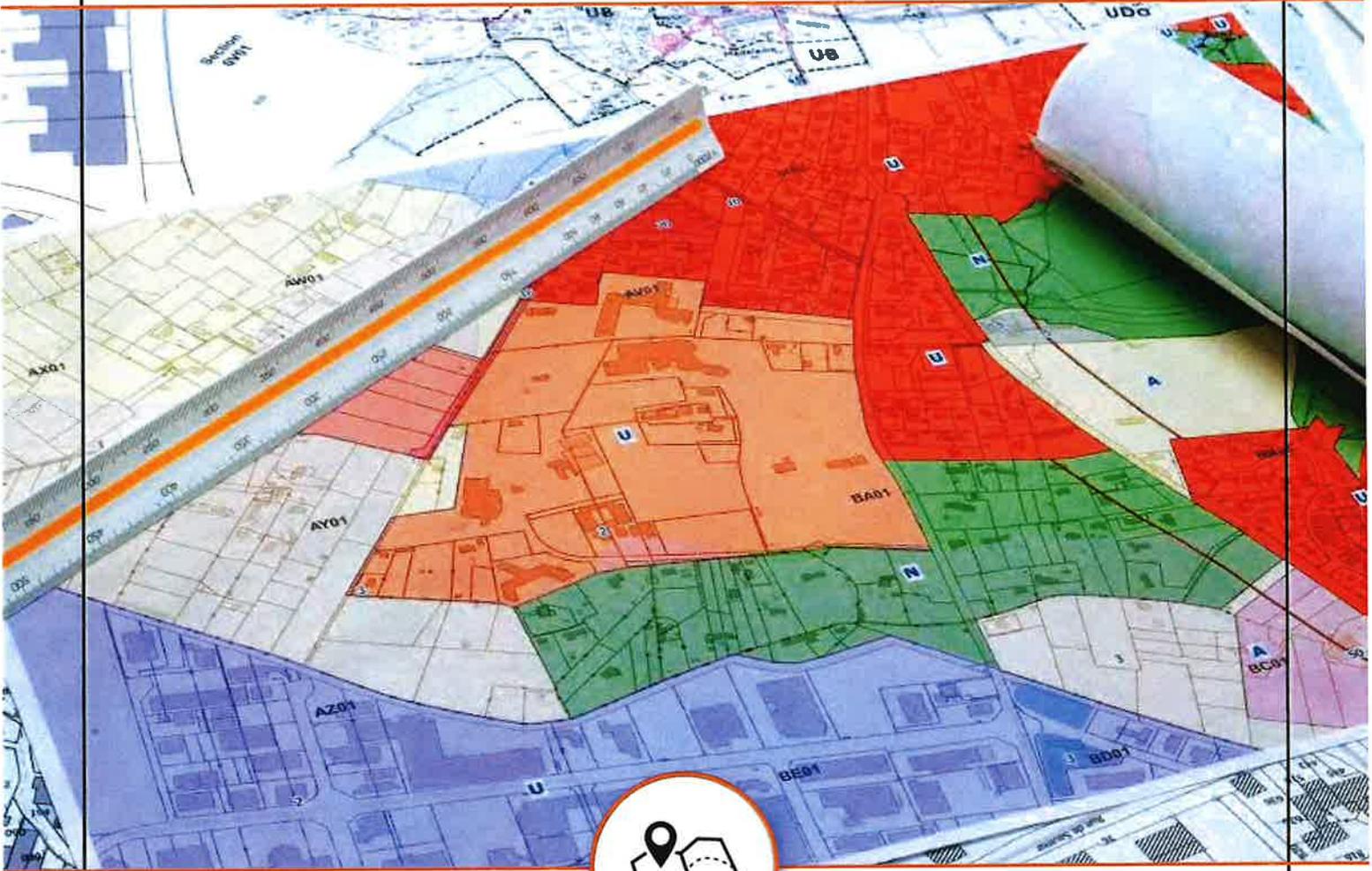
THE PLAN'S
FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

TRI-TOWNSHIP REGION
FUTURE LAND USE MAP VS. ZONING MAP

Under Pennsylvania law, a **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)** and a **Zoning Map** serve different legal and practical purposes. Understanding the distinction is important because each tool plays a separate role in shaping how communities plan for growth and make day-to-day land use decisions.

Future Land Use Map (Comprehensive Plan)

The Future Land Use Map is a policy document, adopted as part of a municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247).

Key Characteristics Include:

Advisory, not regulatory.
The FLUM does not change property rights or directly control what can be built.

Long-range and flexible.
It illustrates the intended pattern of land use over a 10–20 year horizon.

Broad categories.
Designations such as agricultural preservation, residential, mixed-use, employment, or conservation describe general intent rather than precise rules.

Decision-making guidance.
The map helps elected officials evaluate rezonings, infrastructure investments, and subdivision proposals for consistency with adopted community goals.

In practice, the Future Land Use Map answers the question: *What types of development does the community want, and where, over time?*

Zoning Map (Zoning Ordinances)

The Zoning Map is a regulatory tool adopted as part of the zoning ordinance.

Key Characteristics Include:

Legally binding.
It establishes enforceable rules that apply to individual parcels.

Immediate Effect.
Zoning controls land use today, not just in the future.

Detailed Standards.
Each zoning district specifies permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks, height limits, and other development requirements.

Direct impact on property rights.
Landowners must comply with zoning regulations unless a variance or rezoning is approved.

The Zoning Map answers a different question: *What is allowed on a property right now, and under what conditions?*

How They Work Together

- The Future Land Use Map sets policy direction.
- The Zoning Map implements that direction through enforceable standards.
- When inconsistencies arise, Pennsylvania law expects zoning to be updated over time to align with the comprehensive plan, rather than treating the plan as a zoning document itself.

Together, these tools balance long-term vision with predictable, day-to-day regulation.

| FLUM Designation	Purpose of the FLUM Designation	Franklin Township - Percentage of Land	North Sewickley Township - Percentage of Land	Marion Township - Percentage of Land
Agriculture	The Agriculture designation is intended to preserve agricultural lands, support farming and ranching activities, and maintain the area's rural character and open space.	42.59	36.28	75.86
Conservation	The Conservation designation includes lands along waterways, wetlands, and BCCD eased farms, protecting natural resources and maintaining scenic and environmental value.	24.05	4.05	6.79
Industrial	The Industrial designation supports manufacturing, warehousing, and high-tech industries in well-planned locations with strong access to major transportation routes.	1.96	3.36	1.58
Commercial	The Commercial designation supports retail, service, and office uses that provide local jobs, meet daily needs, and enhance corridor appearance and accessibility.	3.55	0.36	1.53
Public	The Public designation identifies parks, trails, and recreation areas that promote health, connection, and community through accessible outdoor spaces.	0.06	2.48	4.58
Low-Density Residential	The Low-Density Residential designation allows single-family homes on large lots that preserve open space and reflect the quiet, rural setting of the Tri-Township area.	9.88	18.32	9.33
Medium-Density Residential	The Medium-Density Residential designation allows a mix of housing types near parks, schools, and services, supporting walkable neighborhoods with connected streets.	14.62	34.52	0.34
Mixed-Use	The Mixed-Use designation encourages a blend of residential, commercial, and office uses that create compact, walkable areas while maintaining rural community character.	0.85	0.65	n/a
Airport	The Airport designation includes the Zelienople Municipal Airport and surrounding lands that support aviation-related and compatible light industrial or commercial uses.	2.44	n/a	n/a

FRANKLIN
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
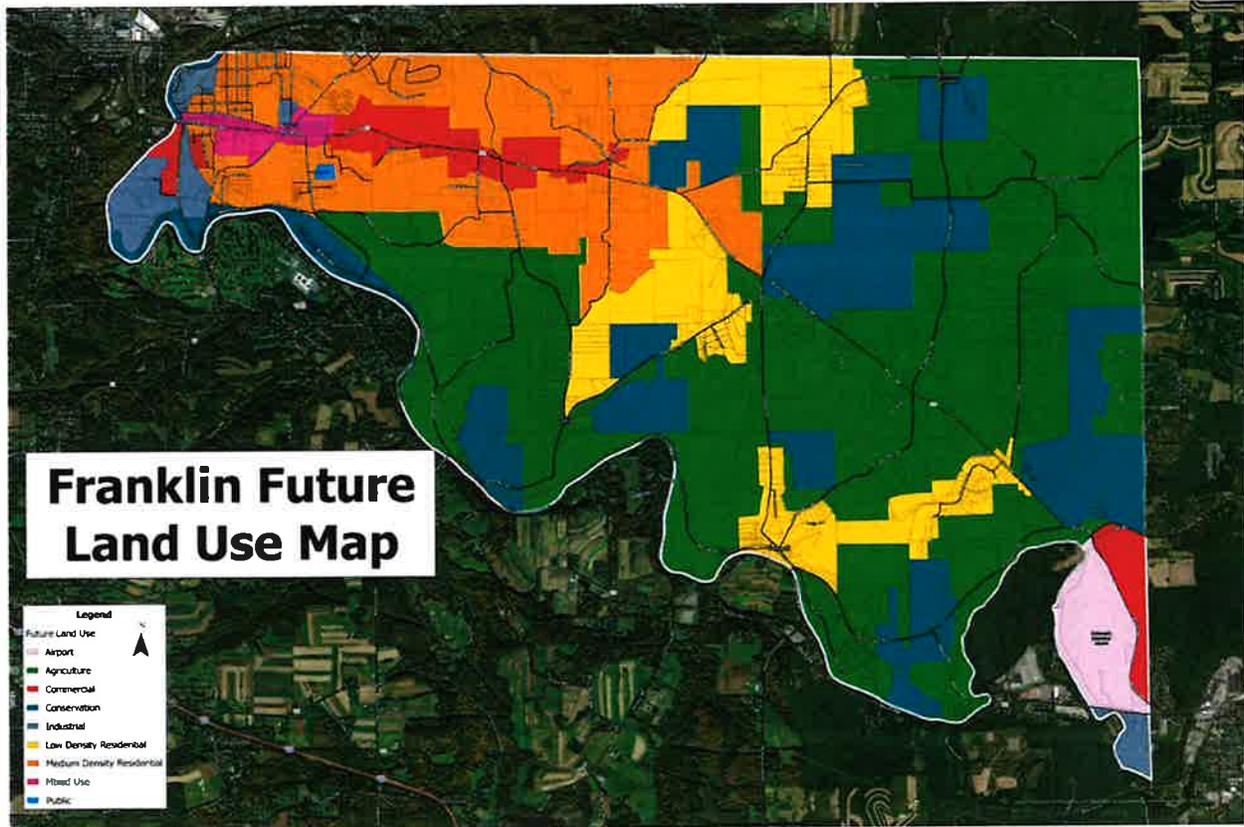
Franklin Township's Future Land Use Map envisions a balance between agricultural preservation, industrial expansion, and residential growth. The southern and eastern portion of the township remains largely designated for agricultural and conservation uses which protect active farmland and open space along the Connoquenessing Creek. Medium- and low-density residential areas are concentrated near existing neighborhoods and corridors such as Route 288 and Zelienople Road, maintaining compatibility with surrounding land uses and supporting gradual population growth. The northwest corridor of the Township along Route 288 serves as the area's main commercial and mixed-used zone, linking the nearby residential areas to employment and service opportunities. The plan identifies the area surrounding the Zelienople Municipal Airport as a commercial growth zone, promoting high-tech and aviation-related uses while buffering nearby residential areas through transitional zoning. This land use framework supports Franklin's role as an economic hub within the Tri-Township region while preserving its rural identity and environmental resources.

MARION
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
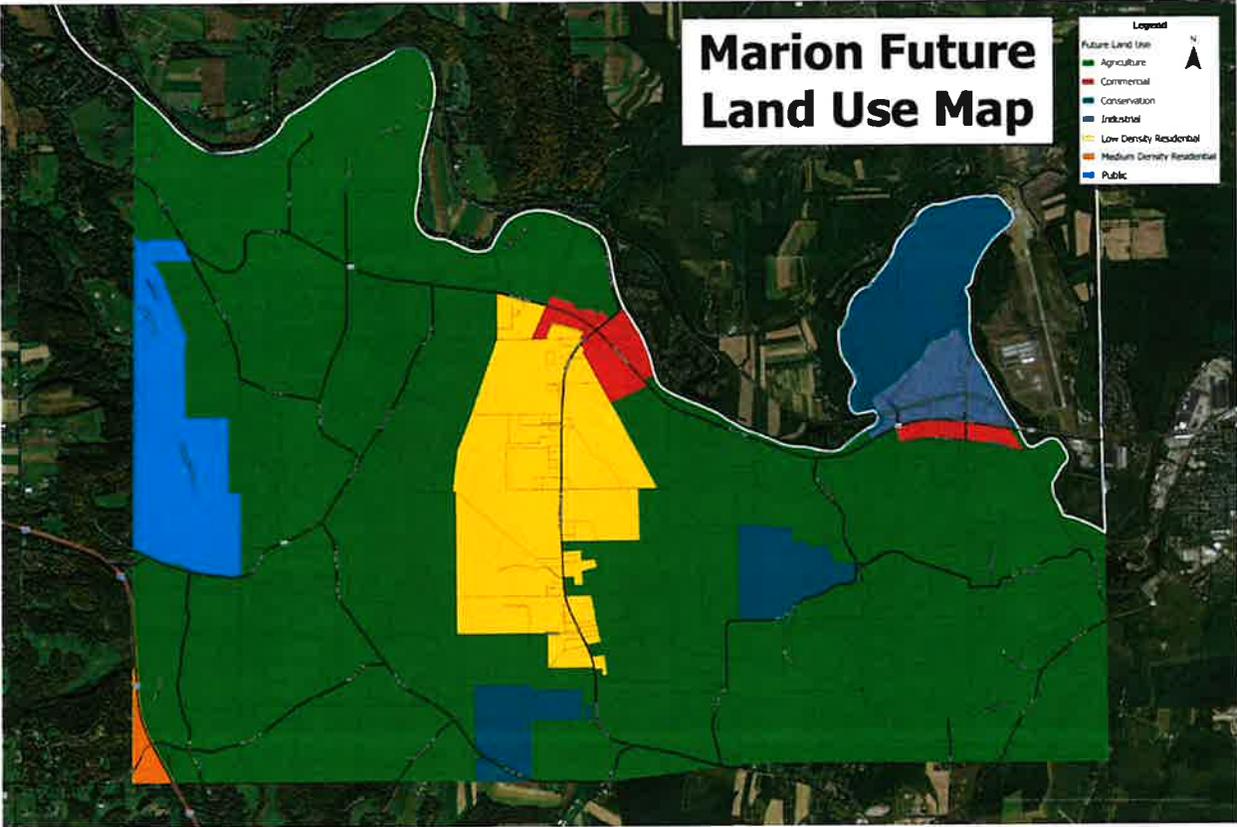
Marion Township's Future Land Use Map emphasizes the preservation of its agricultural core while guiding strategic growth along Route 588. Vast areas of farmland and open space remain under agricultural designation to maintain the township's rural landscape and scenic views. The central portion of the township supports low-density residential development, providing opportunities for modest growth that complements existing neighborhoods. Commercial and light industrial designations are primarily focused along the northeastern boundary near Route 588 and the Franklin Township border, taking advantage of transportation access and proximity to the airport and regional employment centers. Conservation areas along the Connoquenessing Creek and its tributaries protect natural systems and manage floodplain conditions, ensuring that growth aligns with environmental sustainability. This land use pattern reinforces Marion's identity as a rural residential community with targeted economic opportunity.

NORTH SEWICKLEY
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
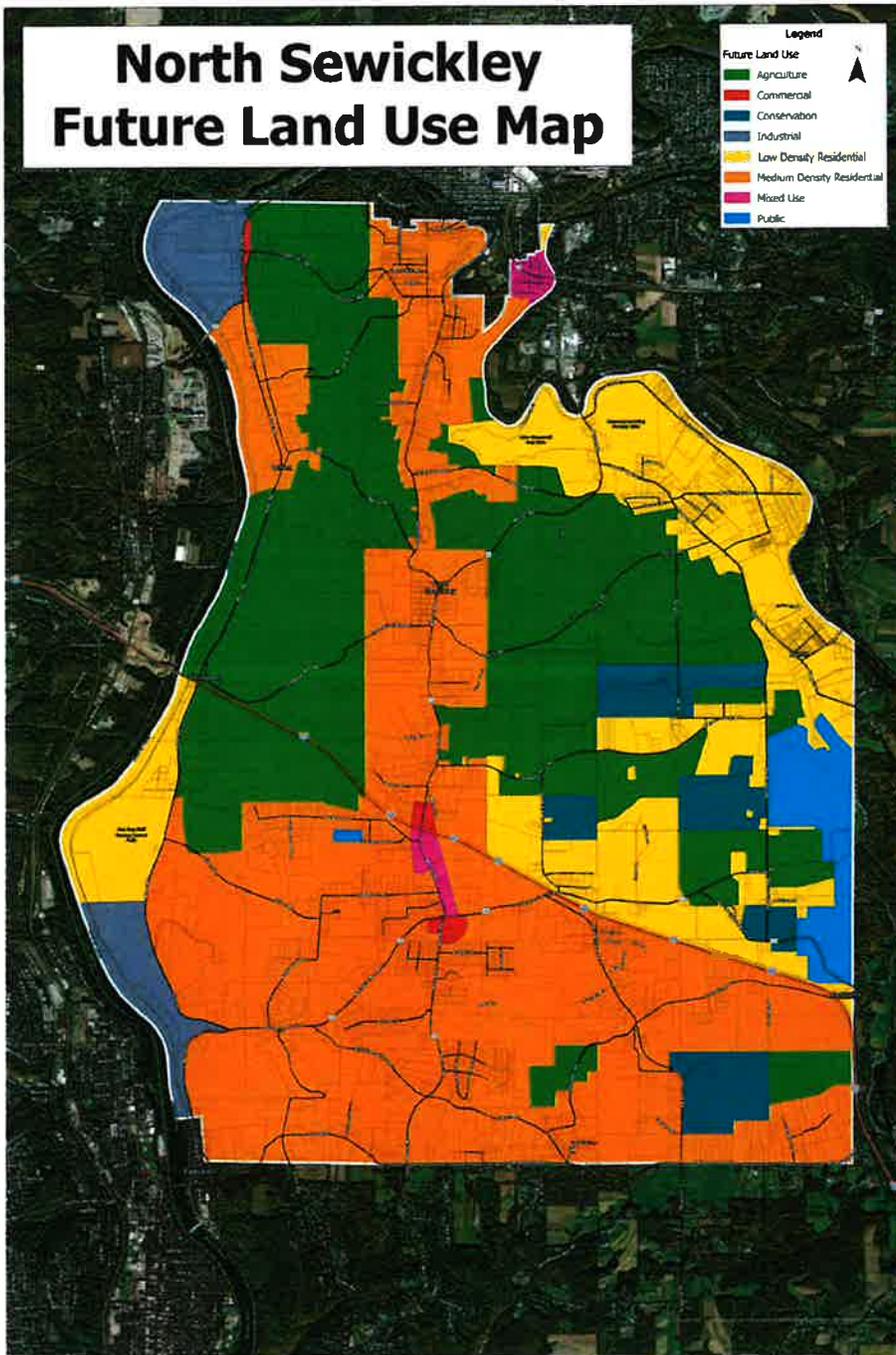
North Sewickley Township's Future Land Use Map outlines a balanced mix of agricultural areas and diverse residential uses that capitalize on the township's strategic location near I-76 and Route 65. Agricultural, medium-density, and low-density residential areas dominate the landscape, helping to maintain open space and the township's traditional rural setting. Medium-density residential and mixed-use designations are concentrated near Route 65, PA-588, and key intersections, supporting walkable neighborhood centers and future small-scale commercial activity. Industrial and commercial zones are located near existing employment corridors and utility infrastructure, providing sites for business expansion without compromising nearby neighborhoods. Conservation and agricultural areas bounded by the Beaver River and Connoquenessing Creek reinforce natural buffers and protect sensitive environments. Collectively, these designations allow North Sewickley to grow steadily while maintaining its small-town character and enhancing its role as a connector between Franklin, Marion, and the broader Beaver County region.
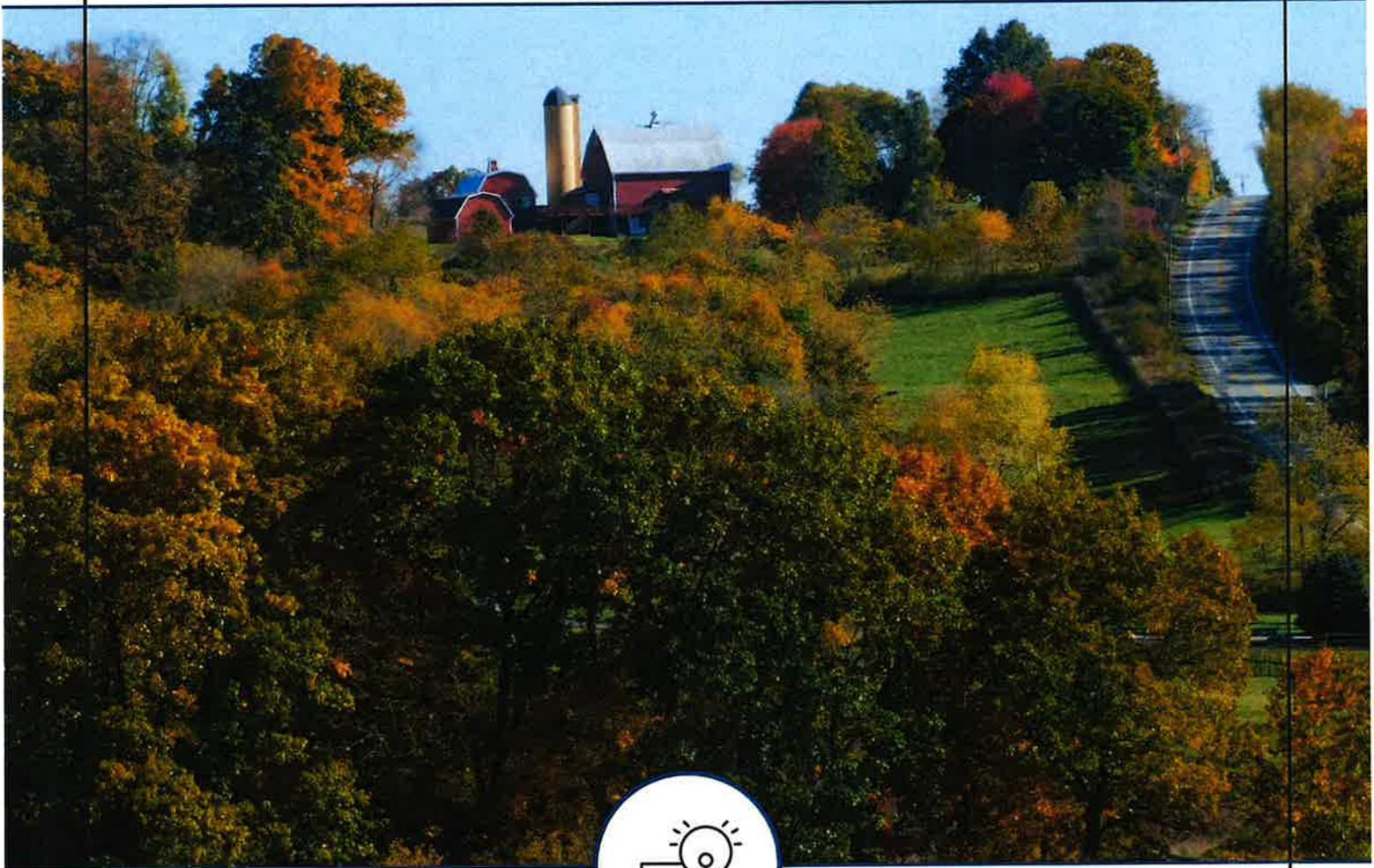
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the Tri-Township Comprehensive Plan for Franklin Township are grounded in the community's core themes and principles, identified early in the planning process through extensive public engagement. Each component of this plan is interrelated, forming a cohesive framework in which economic growth supports social goals and environmental stewardship strengthens fiscal stability. This integrated approach ensures that every initiative reinforces the township's broader objectives, collectively advancing Franklin toward its envisioned future. Moreover, this plan complies with Act 247 - Municipal Planning Requirements.

Rural Character & Open Space

Preserving farmland, woodlands, and open views is central to the Tri-Township identity. Future development will respect the rural landscape by concentrating growth near existing infrastructure to maintain agricultural viability. Conservation of land and natural resources ensures the area's beauty and heritage remain defining strengths.

Recommendations

1. Protect actively farmed lands from incompatible development and preserve the long-term viability of agriculture.

1.1. Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district to preserve farmland and prevent fragmentation.

Strengthening zoning standards in agricultural areas helps keep farmland intact, rather than broken into smaller, less usable parcels. Larger minimum lot sizes support active farming, discourage suburban sprawl, and protect the community's rural heritage while reducing long-term costs tied to scattered development.

1.2. Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.

Expanding farmland preservation programs offer landowners potential tax relief and permanent protection options for agricultural property. Partnering with Beaver County, Franklin Township can connect families to tools to keep land uses agricultural, for the retention of the farm economy, and ensuring open landscapes remain part of the community's future.

Franklin Township family farm
Source: Homes.com

1.3. Establish a Local Agricultural Easement Cooperative Program to purchase undeveloped farmland and permanently protect it through conservation easements.

Creating a local easement program provides a way to purchase development rights from willing landowners, ensuring farmland stays in production. This keeps large tracts connected, prevents suburban encroachment, and gives property owners financial support while protecting the rural character that defines Franklin Township.

Franklin Township family farm
Source: Homes.com

2. Preserve woodlands, waterways, and sensitive habitats through intentional land use planning and resource protection policies.

2.1. Adopt riparian buffer protections along Connoquenessing Creek.

Establishing an ordinance for wetland buffers along the Connoquenessing Creek protects the water quality, reduces erosion of the creekbed, and provides wildlife habitat consistency. Riparian protections for rivers absorb floodwaters and protect nearby property from extreme storm impacts, offering long-term resilience for both the environment and the community.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

2.2. Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.

Mapping and preserving flood-prone and steep-slope areas ensures growth happens in safe, sustainable locations. Protecting these sensitive lands reduces risks to homes and infrastructure, lowers public costs for repairs, and conserves scenic hillsides and natural open space that residents value. The collected data would be stored with the Beaver County Office of Planning and redevelopment and be made available for public use.

2.2. Develop a land stewardship program in collaboration with county and regional entities to implement best practices for conserving agricultural and natural lands, leveraging external grant funding.

A land stewardship program would provide technical assistance, training, and voluntary agreements to help property owners manage farmland and natural areas responsibly. By partnering with county and regional entities, the township can coordinate outreach, share expertise, and use external grants to implement on-the-ground projects that protect local resources.

Connoquenessing Creek
Source: The Pennsylvania Rivers and Conservation Program

3. **Limit suburban-style and cluster developments in key view corridors and areas where open landscapes define local identity.**

3.1. Adopt zoning protections to create scenic overlay districts for major roads.

Scenic overlay districts along key roads can preserve rural views and reinforce township identity. Using an overlay district, which is a zoning tool that adds extra protections on top of existing rules for specific corridors.

By setting clear standards for signage, landscaping, and development design, the community protects the landscapes that make these routes unique.

Aerial Photo
Source: Realtor.com

3.2. Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.

Road standards are regulations that guide how public improvements are designed and built, covering things like access points, lighting, and signage. By partnering with the County and neighboring municipalities, Franklin Township can adopt consistent rules that improve safety, protect scenic corridors, and maintain the township's rural atmosphere.

3.3. Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.

A tree preservation ordinance requires developers to protect or replace trees in scenic corridors, maintaining shade, character, and ecological benefits. Partnering with neighboring municipalities helps share the burden of drafting and enforcing such rules, while recognizing that similar forests cross township lines and deserve consistent protections.

3.4. Revise the zoning code to prevent cul-de-sac and strip development patterns in agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.

Revising zoning to limit cul-de-sacs and strip development promotes connected street networks rather than isolated layouts. Connectivity reduces traffic pressure on main roads, provides alternate routes during closures, and supports clustered development that preserves farmland, maintains open space, and reinforces the township's rural character.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Balanced & Strategic Growth

Coordinated land use and zoning across the three townships will direct development to key corridors while preventing outside sprawl. This approach allows for economic and residential expansion without sacrificing open space or small-town scale.

Recommendations

Construction of Aldi's
Source: Franklin Township

4. Concentrate new development in areas with existing or planned infrastructure to minimize costs and preserve rural areas.

4.1. Require new subdivisions to demonstrate logical extensions of existing infrastructure and a connected street network that supports efficient access, circulation, and long-term service provision.

Directing growth toward areas with existing infrastructure supports efficient service delivery and a connected street network, while reducing long-term public costs and reinforcing a logical development pattern.

4.2. Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.

Regular coordination with service providers ensures development decisions are based on current infrastructure capacity. This helps the township avoid costly extensions, plan proactively, and align land use with available water, sewer, electric, and roadway systems.

4.3. Develop a coordinated Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.

A coordinated plan allows Franklin and its neighbors to preserve farmland, protect natural areas, and guide development away from sensitive lands.

Shared priorities and benchmarks support consistent policies and unlock access to regional funding and partnerships.

5. Encourage business growth that aligns with the rural economy, including agriculture, trades, and home-based enterprises.

5.1. Continue to promote small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in the A/R zoning district.

Supporting low-impact rural businesses helps sustain the local economy while preserving farmland. Encouraging farm-based enterprises, trades, and tourism strengthens agricultural viability, attracts visitors, and allows residents to earn income without compromising Franklin Township's rural character.

Windy Ridge Dairy
Source: Franklin Township

5.2. Establish a streamlined, tiered permitting process that allows low-impact and minimal impact home occupations to be approved administratively, using clear performance standards and online applications to reduce barriers for rural entrepreneurs.

Simplifying the approval process for home-based businesses encourages local entrepreneurship. Clear, tiered standards help distinguish between business types, reduce review time, and ensure compatibility with surrounding uses while supporting Franklin Township's rural economic base.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3. Update permitted uses in zoning districts allowing commercial, retail, sales, and service (i.e., CR-Conservation Residential, LDR-Low Density Residential, MDR-Medium Density Residential, HC-Highway Commercial, and TC-Town Center) along Route 65 and 288 to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services.

Modernizing permitted uses in key corridors ensures zoning reflects current economic needs. Allowing low-impact trades and agricultural services in appropriate districts supports local jobs and services while preserving Franklin Township's character.

5.4. Establish performance-based site standards (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.

Performance-based standards help rural businesses operate without disrupting neighboring properties. By regulating site design, operations, and aesthetics, Franklin Township can support economic activity while protecting community character and maintaining compatibility with adjacent land uses.

Beaver County Farmland Preservation Program
Source: Franklin Township

6. **Ensure that updates to zoning, infrastructure, and services reflect a commitment to rural preservation and managed change.**

6.1. Improve roadway design standards to enhance safety, efficiency, and long-term maintenance.

Improving roadway design standards ensures safer, more efficient travel while reducing long-term maintenance costs. Updates support rural context, promote connectivity, and help the township guide development in ways that align with infrastructure capacity and community character.

Preserved Farm Land
Source: Franklin Township

6.2. Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

A regular five-year review ensures the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance remain relevant and effective. This cycle allows Franklin Township to respond to changing conditions, track progress on goals, and make timely updates based on community input and development trends.

6.3. Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.

Requiring a community impact assessment for large rezonings ensures major land use changes consider effects on infrastructure, traffic, rural character, and fiscal health. This process gives residents and officials the information needed to evaluate whether proposed changes align with community goals.

Community Park
Source: Beaver County, PA

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Roots & Family Life

The Tri-Township area values close relationships, strong families, and civic involvement. The plan supports housing, schools, and gathering places that let residents stay connected across generations. Reinforcing these roots keeps the community welcoming and family oriented.

Recommendations

7. **Support land use and housing strategies in existing and future residential areas that enable families to stay and grow in the community across generations.**

    7.1 Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.

    Exploring flexible housing models like duplexes and co-located family homes supports Franklin Township's goal of keeping families together across generations. These options provide affordable, adaptable housing while preserving rural character and meeting the needs of an aging population and younger households.

    7.2 Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.

    Supporting farm succession planning helps preserve Franklin Township's agricultural legacy. Partnering with lenders and municipalities provides families with tools to transfer land across generations, maintain active farms, and avoid fragmentation due to financial or legal barriers.

    7.3. Expand housing options to support multi-generational living.

    Expanding housing options such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) allows families in Franklin Township to live together across generations.

Park Pavilion
Source: Franklin Township

These flexible arrangements provide affordable housing, support aging in place, and make efficient use of existing properties without changing the rural character.

    7.4 Encourage small-scale, community-oriented housing alternatives.

    Encouraging small-scale housing options like cottage courts supports affordability and aging in place while preserving rural character. These alternatives offer walkable, community-focused living that fits within Franklin Township's development goals and expands choices for households of all ages.

Single Family Home
Source: Compass Real Estate

8. **Ensure residential areas have the infrastructure and services, such as roads, electricity, water, and sewage, needed for long-term quality of life.**

    8.1 Conduct a capital improvements audit to identify needs in roadways, stormwater, and emergency access in residential zones.

    A capital improvements audit allows Franklin Township to identify and prioritize critical infrastructure needs in residential areas. Assessing roads, stormwater, and emergency access ensures investments are targeted, cost-effective, and aligned with long-term quality of life and safety goals.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

8.2. Strengthen coordination with school districts and transportation providers for safe routes and access to schools.

Improving coordination with schools and transportation providers enhances student safety and access. Franklin Township can identify hazardous crossings, improve walking and biking routes, and pursue funding to ensure students have safe, convenient, and connected routes to and from school.

8.3. Support fire and police infrastructure with updated response time mapping and facility needs assessments.

Assessing emergency response times and facility needs helps Franklin Township ensure reliable fire and police services. Strategic planning supports public safety, identifies underserved areas, and guides future investments to improve emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

8.4. Improve rural roadway and stormwater management to support resilient neighborhoods.

Enhancing rural roadway and stormwater systems strengthens Franklin Township's resilience to flooding and infrastructure degradation. Upgrades reduce maintenance costs, protect property, and support safe travel while aligning new development with best management practices.

Stormwater Improvement
Source: Franklin Township

8.5. Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances, thereby stabilizing existing neighborhoods.

Updating and enforcing property maintenance ordinances helps Franklin Township preserve neighborhood character, protect property values, and address nuisance concerns.

A consistent enforcement process promotes community pride and encourages voluntary compliance through education and outreach.

Riverside High School
Source: Franklin Township

9. Foster participation in planning, governance, and volunteer efforts that strengthen local commitment.

9.1 Partner with other Beaver County municipalities to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.

A multi-municipal youth advisory or ambassador program empowers younger residents to engage in local planning and leadership. This initiative builds civic pride, develops future leaders, and brings fresh perspectives to Franklin Township's decision-making processes.

9.2 Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.

Making the process for joining boards and commissions more accessible encourages greater civic participation. Clear information, outreach, and streamlined applications help Franklin Township engage a broader range of residents in local leadership and planning efforts.

9.3. Expand communication tools to improve transparency and resident engagement.

Enhancing communication platforms allows Franklin Township to keep residents informed, gather feedback, and build trust. Regular updates through newsletters, websites, and online tools support transparency and strengthen community involvement in local decision-making.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Preservation & Pride

Historic buildings, farmsteads, and landmarks embody the Tri-Township's heritage. Protecting and reusing these assets preserves local character and fosters civic pride. New development should reflect the area's history, ensuring the past remains visible in the region's future.

Recommendations

10. Protect historic homes, barns, cemeteries, scenic vistas, and other sites that embody the communities heritage.

10.1 Partner with other municipalities and/or the County and pursue grant funding inventory historic sites and identify opportunities for their preservation, protection, or adaptive reuse.

Creating a shared inventory of historic sites allows Franklin Township to identify preservation priorities and funding opportunities. Partnering regionally and pursuing grants supports documentation, protects local heritage, and encourages adaptive reuse that aligns with community character.

10.2 Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.

Seeking National Register eligibility for historic properties celebrates Franklin Township's heritage and opens access to preservation funding. Working with property owners ensures local support and helps protect culturally significant buildings through formal recognition and incentives.

10.3 Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings.

A local tax abatement program would temporarily reduce property taxes for owners who invest in restoring or maintaining historic structures.
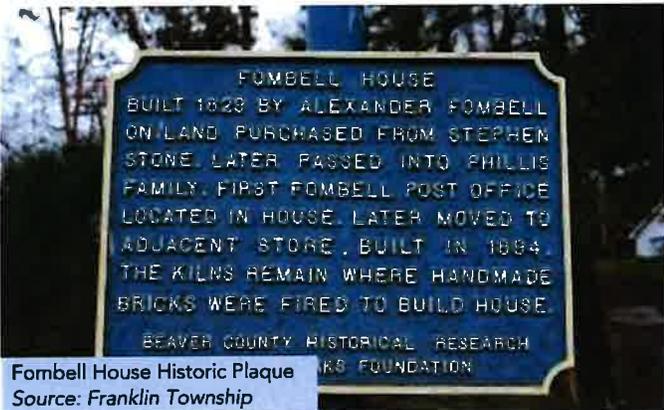
Fombell House Historic Plaque
Source: Franklin Township

By offsetting improvement costs, this tool incentivizes preservation, encourages reinvestment, and helps retain Franklin Township's architectural and cultural heritage.

10.4 Protect scenic corridors and viewsheds from incompatible signage and development.

A scenic corridor overlay would regulate signage height, prohibit billboards, and establish design standards along key rural roads. These measures would preserve open views, protect rural character, and guide development in visually sensitive areas of Franklin Township.
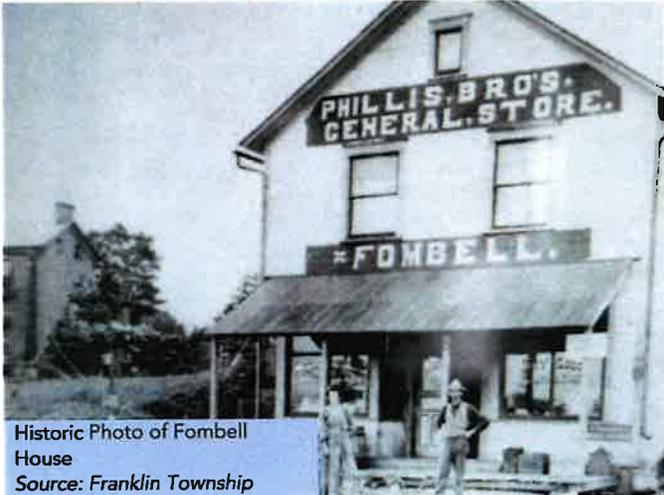
Historic Photo of Fombell House
Source: Franklin Township

11. Utilize zoning overlays, design guidelines, and conservation incentives to maintain township identity.

11.1 Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.

Creating a shared inventory of historic sites allows Franklin Township to identify preservation priorities and funding opportunities. Partnering regionally and pursuing grants supports documentation, protects local heritage, and encourages adaptive reuse that aligns with community character.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

11.2 Provide expedited review and possible code standard exemptions for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.

An expedited review program would fast-track approvals and offer flexibility in code compliance for projects that preserve historic architectural elements. This approach reduces barriers to preservation and encourages reinvestment in older structures throughout Franklin Township.

11.3 Integrate historical compatibility criteria into the site plan review process.

A site plan review process with historical compatibility standards would require new development to reflect surrounding architectural character, materials, and scale. This ensures new construction complements Franklin Township's historic identity and preserves the visual integrity of its built environment

11.4 Require context-sensitive site design for all major land developments in rural districts.

A context-sensitive design requirement would regulate setbacks, landscaping, building form, and materials for large developments in rural areas. This ensures that new construction aligns with Franklin Township's rural character and minimizes visual and environmental impacts.

12.1 Develop a local heritage trail with signage interpreting historic schools, churches, and farmsteads.

A heritage trail program would install interpretive signage at key historic sites throughout Franklin Township. This initiative would celebrate local history, promote rural tourism, and connect residents and visitors to the community's cultural landmarks.

12.2 Support school and scout projects that document oral histories or historic sites in the Township.

A support program would offer small grants, in-kind resources, or public recognition for student and scout-led projects that document Franklin Township's history. This encourages youth engagement while preserving local heritage through storytelling and research.

12.3 Encourage public-steered volunteer activities that help preserve and maintain heritage sites.

A volunteer heritage program would organize community-led cleanups, repairs, and maintenance at historic sites. Franklin Township would provide supplies, promotion, or recognition to support these efforts and foster long-term public stewardship of local landmarks.

Bassenheim Furnace
Source: Franklin Township

12. Celebrate the community's cultural heritage through events, signage, and public-facing preservation initiatives.
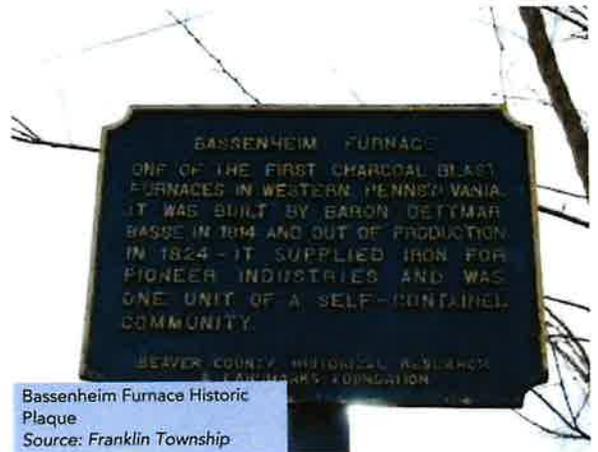
Bassenheim Furnace Historic Plaque
Source: Franklin Township

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recreation, Connectivity, and Well-Being

Expanding parks, trails, and safe travel routes enhances both healthy and community life. Strengthened connections between neighborhoods, schools, and natural areas will create a more active and accessible region. Recreation and connectivity are essential to long-term well-being

Recommendations

13. Increase access to passive and active recreation opportunities by growing and linking open space assets.

13.1 Complete a Tri-Township Open Space Plan in coordination with Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan.

A joint open space plan would identify priority connections, shared goals, and implementation strategies across Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley. The plan would guide future investments, zoning, and subdivision approvals to expand public access to nature.

13.2 Pursue the installation of low-impact public access points along the Connoquenessing Creek.

A creek access initiative would identify and develop low-impact sites for kayaking, fishing, or nature viewing. These improvements would enhance recreational use of the Connoquenessing Creek while minimizing environmental disturbance and respecting adjacent property owners.

13.3 Coordinate with regional partners to connect open space to countywide greenway systems.

A regional coordination effort would align Franklin Township's open space and trail priorities with Beaver County's greenway network. This approach would expand connectivity, leverage funding opportunities, and enhance recreational access across municipal boundaries.

Connoquenessing Creek
Source: Beaver County Times

13.4 Require new development to provide public access easements or open space dedication.

An open space dedication requirement would require new development to incorporate easements or corridors that expand the Township's open space network, ensuring that future growth supports public access, recreation, and long-term connectivity in Franklin Township.

Hiking Trail
Source: Beaver County Tourism

14. Enhance pedestrian infrastructure to support safe and accessible outdoor activity for all users.

14.1 Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.

A walkability audit would evaluate sidewalk conditions, crossings, and gaps near key destinations. The findings would guide investments in pedestrian safety, improve access to schools and gathering places, and support grant applications for targeted infrastructure improvements.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

14.2 Expand funding and resources to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

A funding initiative would support the design and construction of sidewalks, trails, and bike facilities in Franklin Township. By preparing grant-ready projects and building partnerships, the township can close network gaps and enhance safety for non-motorized users.

14.3 Require pedestrian-oriented amenities like benches and shade trees in new developments.

A development standard would mandate the inclusion of benches, street trees, and similar amenities in new projects. These features improve comfort, encourage walking, and contribute to the rural character and visual appeal of Franklin Township's built environment.

15. Encourage neighborhood and facility designs that promote wellness, mobility, and nearby access to healthy lifestyle options.

15.1 Encourage mixed-use cluster developments with nearby access to open space or trail connections.

A mixed-use cluster development option would allow homes and businesses to be grouped near roads while preserving the rest of the site as permanent open space. This form supports rural character, reduces infrastructure costs, and connects residents to trails and nature.

Biking Trail
Source: Trail Link

15.2 Expand development tools that preserve open space while allowing neighborhood growth.

A conservation subdivision tool would allow homes to be clustered on part of a site while protecting the rest as permanent open space. This approach maintains overall density, supports efficient infrastructure, and preserves the rural landscape in Franklin Township.

15.3 Require dedication of trail corridors or public access easements in new developments to link open spaces to the countywide greenway network.

A trail dedication requirement would ensure that new developments include connections to existing or planned greenways. This policy expands public access, strengthens regional trail networks, and integrates recreation into the growth of Franklin Township.

Park Restroom DCNR Grant
Source: Franklin Township

Recommendations	Actions
1.1: Strengthen the Agricultural/ Residential zoning district to discourage fragmentation of farmland.	• Draft ordinance amendments requiring minimum residential lot sizes greater that 5 acres for major subdivisions. • Amend the zoning ordinance to include clustering standards that maintain large contiguous tracts of farmland. • Adopt the ordinance revisions following public hearings and input from agricultural property owners. • Prohibit cul-de-sac and strip development in agricultural zoning districts. • Align future land use map to prioritize contiguous farmland preservation.
1.2: 1.2: Partner with the Franklin Township Agricultural Security Committee to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.	• Engage with Franklin Township Agricultural Security Committee to develop a plan to promote enrollment in ALPB and Clean & Green through joint outreach. • Develop an outreach campaign (mailings, township website, and tax bill inserts) to educate farmers about program benefits. • Designate a township staff member or planning commission representative to assist landowners with applications and coordinate with County staff.
1.3: Establish a Local Agricultural Easement Cooperative Program to purchase undeveloped farmland and permanently protect it through conservation easements.	• Partner with the Beaver County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) to combine local, county, and state funding for farmland easements. • Apply for USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation funds to expand purchase capacity. • Encourage the existing ASA board to develop a township-led outreach program to inform eligible farmers of easement opportunities and assist with applications.
2.1: Adopt riparian buffer protections along Connoquenessing Creek.	• Partner with Beaver County Conservation District to provide technical guidance on vegetation, erosion control, and water quality best practices within buffer zones. • Pursue Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) grant funding to support landowner education and implementation of riparian buffer restoration projects.
2.2: Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.	• Utilize GIS mapping to inventory floodplain and slope areas, utilizing FEMA and county data that is updated regularly. • Require enhanced review and mitigation for new subdivisions or non-agricultural development proposed on lands with slopes greater than 15% or within FEMA 100-year flood zones, with a preference for preservation and open space uses. • Prioritize these areas for conservation easements and open space acquisition in collaboration with regional land trusts and Beaver County programs.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
2.3: Develop a land stewardship program in collaboration with county and regional entities to implement best practices for conserving agricultural and natural lands, leveraging external grant funding.	• Establish a township–county stewardship partnership to train landowners on soil health, habitat management, and forestry best practices. • Promote Voluntary stewardship agreements by offering incentives, including reduced permitting fees or expedited review for development, agricultural, or land-management projects that actively conserve agricultural or natural resources and meet established stewardship practices. • Apply annually for state and federal conservation grants (e.g., DCNR C2P2, USDA NRCS programs) to fund local stewardship projects.
3.1: Adopt zoning protections to create scenic overlay districts for major roads that connect to each district's purpose.	• Conduct a visual preference survey with residents to guide overlay district standards. • Draft overlay zoning that sets design standards for building placement, height, and materials to maintain scenic quality. • Establish buffer and setback requirements along scenic roads to preserve viewsheds.
3.2: Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.	• Coordinate with PennDOT and Beaver County to draft shared rural roadway design guidelines. • Require traffic impact studies for new developments to minimize unnecessary curb cuts along scenic corridors. • Adopt lighting standards that minimize glare, preserve dark skies, and complement the rural character.
3.3: Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.	• Require developers to submit tree surveys as part of subdivision and land development applications. • Mandate preservation of significant tree stands and require replanting at a minimum 1:1 ratio for tree removals. • Offer incentives, such as density bonuses or expedited review, for developments that exceed minimum tree preservation requirements.
3.4: Revise the zoning code to prevent cul-de-sac and strip development patterns in agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.	• Update subdivision standards to require interconnected road networks instead of cul-de-sacs, except where topography dictates otherwise. • Prohibit strip-style commercial development by requiring clustered building placement and shared access drives. • Encourage conservation subdivision design that preserves large blocks of open space while allowing limited clustered housing.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
4.1: Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure and a connected street network that supports efficient access, circulation, and long-term service provision.	• Amend subdivision regulations to prioritize interconnected street layouts with multiple access points, encouraging connectivity while allowing cul-de-sacs where site conditions, safety, or design considerations warrant. • Establish a subdivision review checklist to ensure applications clearly demonstrate how proposed infrastructure and street networks connect to and build upon existing systems.
4.2: Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.	• Engage the providers and PennDOT through quarterly coordination meetings to share planned upgrades, service extensions, and road projects. • Collect and analyze data...annually of infrastructure capacity, including water, sewer, electric, and roadway networks, to ensure accurate planning. • Determine policy implications for future development by aligning zoning and subdivision approvals with updated service boundaries.
4.3: Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.	• Draft an intergovernmental agreement with neighboring municipalities and Beaver County to collaborate on the plan. • Apply for grant funding to support plan development and shared implementation. • Adopt the finalized plan as an official policy document in each participating municipality to ensure consistency.
5.1: Promote small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in the A/R zoning district.	• Draft and adopt an ordinance to update the permitted use tables to clearly allow small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism activities. • Engage with Beaver County agencies to develop a partnership to provide training, marketing, and technical support for rural entrepreneurs. • Develop rural business wayfinding and signage guidelines to help agri-tourism sites attract visitors while maintaining rural character.
5.2: Establish a streamlined, tiered permitting process that allows low-impact and minimal impact home occupations to be approved administratively, using clear performance standards and online applications to reduce barriers for rural entrepreneurs.	• Create tiered performance standards (traffic, parking, outdoor storage, noise) to distinguish between low- and moderate-impact home occupations. • Implement administrative approval for low-impact home businesses to reduce costs and review delays. • Launch an online permitting platform with clear instructions, forms, and digital payment options for entrepreneurs.
5.3: Update permitted uses in zoning districts allowing commercial, retail, sales, and service (i.e., CR-Conservation Residential, LDR-Low Density Residential, MDR-Medium Density Residential, HC-Highway Commercial, and TC-Town Center) along Route 65 and 288 to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services.	• Review the currently allowed uses in each zoning district to identify which uses are still desired, which are not desired, and the uses that are not listed but would accomplish the objective. • Draft and adopt an ordinance to allow certain low-impact trade and agricultural service uses in the respective zoning districts.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
5.4: Establish performance-based site standards (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.	• Through a collaborative process with the public, identify the shortcomings of current ordinances for outdoor storage and equipment screening. • Develop and adopt an ordinance to set standards for outdoor storage and equipment screening to minimize visual impacts. • Through a collaborative process with the public, identify the shortcomings of current ordinances for hours of operation for non-agricultural rural businesses. • Develop and adopt an ordinance to set limits on hours of operation for non-agricultural rural businesses to reduce conflicts with nearby residences. • Through a collaborative process with the public, identify the shortcomings of signage regulations and ensure that constitutionality is maintained per Reed vs. Town of Gilbert (2015). • Develop and adopt an ordinance to regulate signage size, lighting, and placement to balance business visibility with preservation of rural character, while respecting constitutional rights.
6.1: Improve roadway design standards to enhance safety, efficiency, and long-term maintenance.	• Evaluate alternatives to traditional traffic signals, such as roundabouts, that are compatible with rural roadway contexts. • Incorporate updated roadway design standards into township ordinances and development review processes. • Pursue funding and intergovernmental partnerships to support cost-effective roadway improvements.
6.2: Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.	• Adopt a resolution requiring a scheduled review of the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance every five years. • Form a review committee of township officials, planning commission members, and residents to evaluate progress and recommend updates. • Publish a public report summarizing findings from each review cycle and outlining proposed ordinance changes.
6.3: Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.	• Define thresholds for rezonings (e.g., 10+ acres) that trigger a mandatory community impact assessment. • Develop standardized criteria for assessing impacts on traffic, infrastructure, fiscal, and rural character. • Require developers to fund the preparation of community impact assessments as part of rezoning applications.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
7.1: Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.	• Identify zoning districts suitable for duplexes, family homes, and other multi-generational housing models. • Partner with regional planning agencies to draft sample ordinances enabling these housing types. • Host community workshops to gauge public support and provide education about the benefits of multi-generational living.
7.2: Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.	• Collaborate with local banks and credit unions to create financing tools that assist with intergenerational farm transfers. • Partner with Beaver County to host succession planning workshops for farm families. • Provide township letters of support for farm families applying to state and federal land transfer assistance programs.
7.3: Expand housing options to support multi-generational living.	• Draft zoning ordinance amendments that allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential and agricultural zones. • Adopt updated regulations following public hearings and stakeholder engagement. • Promote awareness of ADU opportunities through educational materials for property owners.
7.4: Encourage small-scale, community-oriented housing alternatives.	• Amend zoning to permit cottage court housing arrangements in select districts. • Establish design standards that integrate shared open space, pedestrian access, and rural character. • Incentivize cottage court development by streamlining approvals or offering flexible lot size requirements.
8.1: Conduct a capital improvements audit to identify needs in roadways, stormwater, and emergency access in residential zones.	• Inventory roadway, stormwater, and emergency access conditions across all neighborhoods. • Prioritize capital projects based on safety, service reliability, and cost-effectiveness.
8.2: Strengthen coordination with school districts and transportation providers for safe routes and access to schools.	• Partner with PennDOT and school districts to implement traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements. • Apply for Safe Routes to School and DCED multimodal grants to fund improvements.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

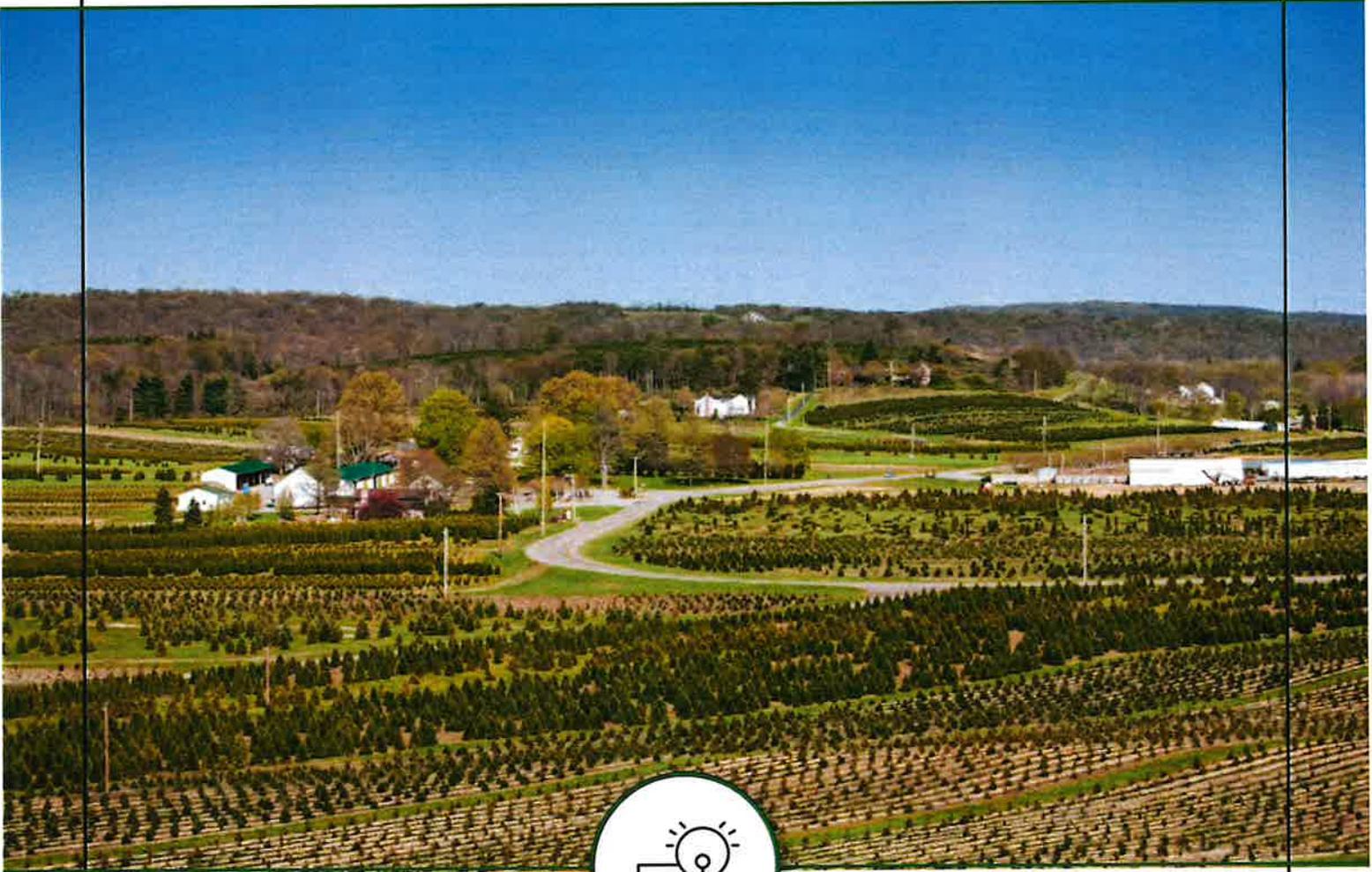| Recommendations	Actions
8.3: Support fire and police infrastructure with updated response time mapping and facility needs assessments.	• Conduct mapping to identify underserved areas and evaluate emergency response times. • Coordinate with regional service providers to plan for facility and staffing needs. • Pursue external funding and partnerships to support long-term emergency service improvements.
8.4: Improve rural roadway and stormwater management to support resilient neighborhoods.	• Evaluate roadway conditions and prioritize upgrades in areas with drainage challenges. • Draft ordinance updates requiring stormwater best management practices in new residential development. • Apply for funding and partnerships to implement environmentally sensitive road and drainage projects.
8.5: Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances and stabilize existing neighborhoods.	• Review and update property maintenance and nuisance ordinances to align with community goals. • Establish a consistent code enforcement process, including clear timelines for compliance. • Provide public education to encourage voluntary compliance and neighborhood upkeep.
9.1: Partner with other Beaver County municipalities to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.	• Collaborate with neighboring municipalities and schools to recruit youth representatives for advisory roles. • Develop a structured program that includes mentorship, training, and clearly defined roles for youth participants. • Recognize and celebrate youth contributions through annual events, certificates, or township meetings.
9.2: Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.	• Develop a step-by-step guide and application form, available online and at the township office. • Use the township website, newsletter, and social media to advertise board vacancies. • Hold an annual "Civic Engagement Night" to introduce residents to volunteer opportunities.
9.3: Expand communication tools to improve transparency and resident engagement.	• Establish an online platform where residents can submit feedback and track responses to community concerns. • Adopt policies to ensure township communication tools are regularly updated and accessible to all residents.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
10.1: Partner with other municipalities and/or the County and pursue grant funding to inventory historic sites and identify opportunities for their preservation, protection, or adaptive reuse.	• Apply for PHMC (PA Historical and Museum Commission) and DCED grants to fund a township-wide historic resource inventory. • Collaborate with local historical societies, schools, and volunteers to document historic structures, cemeteries, and scenic landscapes. • Develop an online, publicly accessible map of historic resources to guide adaptive reuse and preservation efforts.
10.2: Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.	• Identify historic buildings and farms that meet National Register eligibility criteria through surveys and local input. • Provide property owners with technical assistance and connections to preservation organizations for application preparation. • Partner with regional preservation groups to secure letters of support and coordinate documentation.
10.3: Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings.	• Draft an ordinance authorizing property tax abatements for investments in historic preservation and adaptive reuse. • Partner with the County to align abatement incentives with state-level preservation tax credits. • Promote the program through township newsletters, real estate professionals, and property owner workshops.
10.4: Protect scenic corridors and viewsheds from incompatible signage and development.	• Draft regulations prohibiting digital and static billboards within designated scenic corridors. • Adopt height restrictions and design standards for signage to maintain scenic views. • Map scenic corridors on the future land use plan to guide township decision-making and enforcement.
11.1: Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.	• Collaborate with Beaver County and DCED to secure funding for a regional rural design guidelines study. • Collaborate with local architects, preservation groups, and local municipalities to ensure that guidelines reflect the traditional rural character. • Share finalized design guidelines across municipalities to ensure consistent application along shared corridors.
11.2: Provide expedited review and possible code standard exemptions for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.	• Establish a permit process for preservation-focused projects that maintain or restore original features. • Offer reduced or waived permitting fees for projects that retain historic materials or design elements. • Apply for PHMC and DCED grants to provide technical assistance for property owners seeking exemptions.

Recommendations	Actions
11.3: Integrate historical compatibility criteria into the site plan review process.	• Add design review standards to subdivision and land development ordinances, requiring compatibility with the historic character of the area. • Train planning commission members to evaluate site plans for architectural and landscape compatibility. • Require applicants for significant developments to provide visual renderings showing alignment with the township's identity.
11.4: Require context-sensitive site design for all major land developments in rural districts.	• Update zoning overlays to require setbacks, landscaping, and materials that are consistent with the rural character. • Partner with PennDOT to integrate rural roadway design standards into site access and circulation plans. • Encourage cluster design in rural districts that preserves open space and scenic views while allowing limited development.
12.1: Develop a local heritage trail with signage interpreting historic schools, churches, and farmsteads.	• Apply for DCNR and PHMC grants to design and install interpretive signage along the heritage trail. • Partner with local schools, historical societies, and civic groups to research and write site histories. • Incorporate the heritage trail into regional tourism promotion efforts to attract visitors and support local businesses.
12.2: Support school and scout projects that document oral histories or historic sites in the Township.	• Create a township-led program that connects students and scouts with older residents for oral history interviews. • Provide small grants or recognition awards for student and scout projects documenting historic sites. • Publish completed projects on the township website and in community newsletters.
12.3: Encourage public-steered volunteer activities in Franklin Township that help preserve and maintain heritage sites.	• Establish an annual "Franklin Township Day of Service" focused on cemetery cleanups, barn stabilization, and trail upkeep. • Partner with nonprofits and local businesses to provide tools, supplies, and sponsorships for volunteer events. • Recognize volunteers publicly at township meetings and through social media to build long-term participation.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
13.1: Complete a Tri-Township Open Space Plan in coordination with Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan.	• Partner with neighboring townships and the County to secure DCNR grant funding for the joint plan. • Use community workshops and surveys to identify priority open space connections. • Adopt the plan as an official policy document to guide future zoning and subdivision approvals.
13.2: Pursue the installation of low-impact public access points along the Connoquenessing Creek.	• Identify priority sites for creek access that minimize floodplain disturbance and environmental impacts. • Apply for DCNR, C2P2, and DEP grants to design and build kayak launches, fishing nodes, or small trailheads. • Partner with local civic groups and landowners to support stewardship and long-term maintenance of access sites.
13.3: Coordinate with regional partners to connect open space to countywide greenway systems.	• Collaborate with Beaver County Greenways and Trails Partnership to align local priorities with regional initiatives. • Pursue intermunicipal agreements for shared trail maintenance responsibilities. • Leverage regional branding to market trail and open space connections as part of Beaver County's tourism assets.
13.4: Require developers to dedicate trail corridors or public access easements in new projects.	• Amend subdivision and land development ordinances to require trail or easement dedication as part of approvals. • Create a township trail and open space map to guide developers on where dedications are most valuable. • Offer density bonuses or expedited review for projects that exceed minimum dedication requirements.
14.1: Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.	• Apply for PennDOT's Safe Routes to School and DCED multimodal grants to fund a township-wide walkability audit. • Partner with schools, senior centers, and civic groups to identify unsafe crossings and sidewalk gaps. • Prioritize low-cost, high-impact improvements (e.g., crosswalk striping, signage, curb ramps) for immediate action.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
14.2: Expand funding and resources to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.	• Prepare conceptual designs for priority sidewalk and trail gaps to strengthen external grant applications. • Apply for multimodal, recreation, and transportation funding to implement bike and pedestrian improvements. • Partner with schools, churches, and civic groups to document community needs and support for grant proposals.
14.3: Require pedestrian-oriented amenities like benches and shade trees in new developments.	• Amend subdivision and land development ordinances to include minimum standards for pedestrian amenities. • Offer developer incentives (e.g., density bonuses, expedited review) for exceeding pedestrian amenity requirements. • Pursue DCNR and other grants to fund tree planting and benches in both public spaces and new private developments.
15.1: Encourage mixed-use cluster developments with nearby access to open space or trail connections.	• Draft zoning amendments permitting clustered, mixed-use developments in designated growth areas. • Adopt ordinance language that provides density bonuses or reduced lot size requirements for projects with direct trail or open space connections. • Review subdivision proposals to ensure cluster developments contribute to wellness and mobility goals.
15.2: Expand development tools that preserve open space while allowing neighborhood growth.	• Draft a conservation subdivision ordinance that allows clustered housing while protecting a percentage of land as open space. • Adopt the ordinance following a public hearing process and integrate it into subdivision regulations. • Provide developers with design guidance that illustrates conservation subdivision layouts, balancing growth and preservation.
15.3: Require dedication of trail corridors or public access easements in new developments to link open spaces to the countywide greenway network.	• Update subdivision and land development ordinances to require trail and easement dedications in new projects. • Use a plan for open space and trails to identify priority connections for developer contributions within the township. • Coordinate with Beaver County Greenways and DCNR to align local trail dedications with the broader regional network.

Franklin Township Implementation Strategies

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural Character and Open Spaces

Preserving farmland, woodlands, and open views is central to the Tri-Township identity. Future development will respect the rural landscape by concentrating growth near existing infrastructure to maintain agricultural viability. Conservation of land and natural resources ensures the area's beauty and heritage remain defining strengths.

Recommendations

1. **Increase access to passive and active recreation opportunities by growing and linking open space assets.**

   1.1 Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district with minimum residential lot sizes greater than 5 acres that discourage fragmentation of farmland.

   A zoning update would require larger minimum lot sizes in agricultural areas to reduce farmland fragmentation, discourage suburban sprawl, and preserve large, contiguous tracts for continued agricultural use.

   1.2 Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.

   A township-led outreach effort would promote enrollment in the ALPB and Clean & Green program by educating eligible landowners, offering application support, and coordinating with Beaver County to increase participation in farmland preservation initiatives.

   1.3 Strengthen participation in and promote the Beaver County Agricultural Land Preservation Board to permanently protect farmland through conservation easements.

   A conservation initiative would support landowners in applying for agricultural easements by providing technical assistance, mapping priority farmland, and identifying funding sources to help permanently protect working farms in Marion Township.

Approved Preserved Farmland
Source: Pennsylvania Treasury

Woodlands
Source; DRS

2. **Safeguard woodlands, steep slopes, and water resources using land use tools and conservation partnerships.**

   2.1 Adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek and Connoquenessing Creek.

   A riparian buffer ordinance would establish minimum setback and vegetation requirements along Brush Creek and Connoquenessing Creek to protect water quality, reduce erosion, and preserve streamside habitats in Marion Township.

   2.2 Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.

   A mapping and conservation effort would identify flood-prone and steep-slope areas, restrict development in hazardous zones, and prioritize these lands for protection as permanent open space in Marion Township.

   2.3 Create a land stewardship program in partnership with county and regional entities to implement best practices for preserving agricultural and natural land, supported by outside grant funding.

   A land stewardship program would provide education, technical assistance, and incentives to help landowners implement conservation practices. By partnering with county and regional organizations, Marion Township can support farmland and natural resource protection using external grant funding.

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

3. **Shape land use regulations to ensure that new development reinforces, rather than diminishes, the township's rural character.**

3.1 Encourage public-steered volunteer activities that help preserve and maintain heritage sites.

A volunteer heritage program would organize community-led cleanups, repairs, and maintenance at historic sites. Marion Township would provide supplies, promotion, or recognition to support these efforts and foster long-term public stewardship of local landmarks.

3.2 Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.

A tree preservation ordinance would require developers to protect or replace trees along scenic corridors. Partnering with neighboring municipalities ensures consistent standards that preserve canopy cover, rural views, and ecological value across township boundaries.

3.3 Revise the zoning code to prevent cul-de-sac and strip development patterns in agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.

A zoning revision would prohibit cul-de-sacs and strip development in rural zones, instead requiring interconnected road networks and clustered layouts. This helps protect open space, maintain farmland continuity, and support efficient infrastructure in Marion Township.

3.4 Draft and adopt siting and screening standards for new buildings to blend with rural surroundings.

New siting and screening standards would require appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and visual buffers to ensure that new buildings fit the rural context. These regulations would help new development in Marion Township complement the surrounding landscape and community character.

Connoquessening Creek
Source: DRS

Tree Preservation
Source: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Balanced and Strategic Growth

Growth will occur where it supports community character and existing infrastructure. Coordinated land use and zoning across the three townships will direct development to key corridors while preventing outside sprawl. This approach allows for economic and residential expansion without sacrificing open space or small-town scale.

Recommendations

4. **Focus new development near existing roadways and utility service areas to reduce sprawl and infrastructure costs.**

   4.1 Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure.

   A subdivision requirement would mandate that new developments be located near existing roads and utilities. This ensures efficient infrastructure use, reduces public costs, and prevents scattered development patterns in Marion Township.

   4.2 Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.

   A coordination effort with utility providers and PennDOT would keep Marion Township informed about infrastructure capacity and service boundaries. This information supports sound development decisions and helps align zoning and subdivision approvals with available services.

   4.3 Through the future land use map, identify priority growth areas near existing water and sewer infrastructure.

   The future land use map designates areas near existing water and sewer lines as priority growth zones. This guides development to appropriate locations, supports infrastructure efficiency, and helps preserve open space in Marion Township.

Farmland
Source; Marion Township

Farmland
Source; Marion Township

5. **Encourage businesses in trades, agriculture, home occupations, and rural tourism that align with the township's scale and economy.**

   5.1 Permit small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural zoning districts.

   A zoning amendment would allow small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism as permitted uses in rural districts. This supports Marion Township's agricultural economy while maintaining compatibility with surrounding land uses.

   5.2 Establish a streamlined tiered permitting process that allows no- and minimal-impact home occupations to be approved administratively, using clear performance standards and online applications to reduce barriers for rural entrepreneurs.

   A tiered permitting system would allow low-impact home occupations to be approved administratively through clear performance standards and an online application. This approach reduces barriers for rural entrepreneurs while ensuring compatibility with residential areas in Marion Township.

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3 Update permitted uses in the A-1 Residential Agriculture District (PRD Allowed) and R-1 Residential District (PRD Allowed) to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services.

A zoning update would revise use tables in the A-1 and R-1 districts to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services. This expands economic opportunities in Marion Township while maintaining residential and rural compatibility.

5.4 Establish performance-based site standards as part of broader Design Standards in the ordinance (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.

Performance-based site standards would regulate elements like storage, signage, and hours of operation to reduce conflicts between rural businesses and nearby homes. These standards would help ensure new uses remain compatible with Marion Township's character and zoning intent.

6. Use planning tools and periodic updates to ensure growth aligns with preservation values and community priorities.

6.1 Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.

A joint open space and land preservation plan would define shared priorities, benchmarks, and conservation tools across Marion and neighboring townships. This coordinated approach would support regional planning, improve access to funding, and protect valued rural landscapes.

Connoquessening Creek
Source; Marion Township
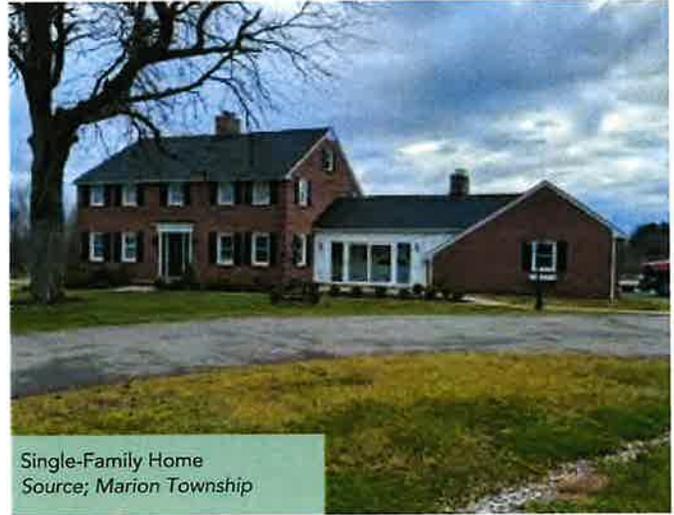
Single-Family Home
Source; Marion Township

6.2 Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

A five-year review cycle would ensure Marion Township's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance stay up to date with local needs, development trends, and community priorities. Regular updates promote responsive governance and more effective long-term planning.

6.3 Partner with the County to track building permits and land conversions annually to assess development trends.

An annual tracking program in partnership with the County would monitor building permits and land conversions. This data would help Marion Township evaluate growth patterns, assess farmland loss, and adjust policies to guide future development.

6.4 Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.

A community impact assessment ordinance would require developers to evaluate infrastructure, traffic, and fiscal impacts for large rezonings. This ensures Marion Township can make informed decisions and protect community character during major land use changes.

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Roots and Family Life

The Tri-Township area values close relationships, strong families, and civic involvement. The plan supports housing, schools, and gathering places that let residents stay connected across generations. Reinforcing these roots keeps the community welcoming and family oriented.

Recommendations

7. Allow flexible housing arrangements and family land divisions to maintain intergenerational presence and ownership.

7.1 Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.

A collaborative housing initiative would explore zoning updates and model ordinances that allow duplexes and co-located family homes. These flexible housing options support multi-generational living and help families remain in Marion Township across life stages.

7.2 Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.

A succession planning initiative would connect landowners with lenders, legal tools, and peer communities to support intergenerational farm transfers. This effort helps preserve Marion Township's agricultural economy and prevent the fragmentation of family-owned farmland.

7.3 Amend the zoning ordinance to specify permitted accessory uses by right, including accessory dwelling units, to provide clarity and support diversified land use in the A-1, R-1, and CN districts.

A zoning amendment would clearly list accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as permitted uses in A-1, R-1, and CN districts. This provides regulatory clarity, expands housing options, and supports multi-generational living in Marion Township.

Barn on Residential Property
Source; Marion Township

7.4 Permit cottage court home arrangements in zoning districts near main streets or commercial corridors to provide middle housing options.

A zoning provision would allow cottage court housing in targeted areas, offering small, community-oriented homes with shared open space. This provides a rural-appropriate middle housing option that supports aging in place and diversified housing in Marion Township.

Railroad and Public Facilities
Source; Marion Township

8. Maintain infrastructure, protect residential areas from incompatible uses, and coordinate with public safety services.

8.1 Prioritize road maintenance and stormwater upgrades in older neighborhoods.

An infrastructure improvement strategy would target older neighborhoods for road repairs and stormwater system upgrades. Prioritizing these areas improves safety, extends the life of public infrastructure, and supports long-term livability in Marion Township.

8.2 Update zoning to buffer residential zones from noise- or traffic-generating land uses.

A zoning update would establish buffer requirements such as setbacks, landscaping, or screening between residential areas and more intense uses. This protects neighborhood quality of life and reduces conflicts in Marion Township's transitional zones.

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

8.3 Hold annual coordination meetings with emergency service providers to assess needs.

Annual coordination meetings with emergency service providers would help Marion Township identify gaps in coverage, evaluate response times, and plan for facility or staffing needs to ensure reliable public safety services.

8.4 Apply for Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program for environmentally sensitive drainage in rural areas.

Participation in Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program would fund environmentally sensitive drainage improvements on rural roads. This reduces erosion, protects waterways, and lowers long-term maintenance costs for Marion Township.

8.5 Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances and stabilize existing neighborhoods.

A code enforcement initiative would update ordinances, establish clear procedures, and promote compliance to address property maintenance issues. This helps stabilize neighborhoods, protect property values, and maintain community appearance in Marion Township.

Construction Company
Source; Marion Township

Railroad
Source; Marion Township

9. Encourage volunteerism, public input, and local pride through community events and leadership opportunities.

9.1 Partner to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.

A youth advisory or ambassador program would engage students in civic life by providing leadership roles, mentorship, and input opportunities. Partnering with neighboring municipalities expands reach and encourages long-term community involvement in Marion Township.

9.2 Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.

An outreach initiative would clarify the process for joining boards and commissions through accessible materials and active promotion. This encourages broader civic participation and brings diverse perspectives into Marion Township's decision-making.

9.3 Develop a township newsletter and a monitored online platform to share updates and gather feedback.

A township newsletter and interactive online platform would provide regular updates, promote transparency, and gather community input. These tools help Marion Township engage residents more effectively and respond to local concerns.

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Preservation and Pride

Historic buildings, farmsteads, and landmarks embody the Tri-Township's heritage. Protecting and reusing these assets preserves local character and fosters civic pride. New development should reflect the area's history, ensuring the past remains visible in the regions future.

Recommendations

10. Identify, document, and preserve key historic properties that reflect Marion Township's rural history.

10.1 Partner and pursue grant funding to inventory historic barns, cemeteries, and homesteads for potential protection or reuse.

A historic resource inventory project would document barns, cemeteries, and homesteads throughout Marion Township. By pursuing grant funding and partnerships, the township can identify preservation opportunities and support adaptive reuse of significant sites.

10.2 Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.

A National Register eligibility effort would identify qualifying historic structures and assist property owners with the application process. Recognition can unlock funding opportunities and increase awareness of Marion Township's historic assets.

10.3 Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings, with permission from property owners.

A local tax abatement program would temporarily reduce property taxes for owners who invest in restoring or maintaining historic structures. This incentive encourages preservation and reinvestment while respecting property owner choice in Marion Township.

Historic Cemetery
Source; Marion Township

11. Introduce tools to safeguard character-defining sites and structures.

11.1 Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.

A regional design guideline project would define appropriate rural architectural styles, materials, and site layouts. Partnering with neighboring municipalities and the state ensures consistent standards that reflect Marion Township's historic and rural character.

11.2 Provide expedited review and possible code standard exemptions for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.

An expedited review and exemption program would fast-track approvals and offer code flexibility for projects that preserve original architectural features. This reduces barriers to preservation and encourages reinvestment in Marion Township's historic structures.

Historic Plaque
Source; Marion Township

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

11.3 Integrate historical compatibility criteria into the site plan review process.

A site plan review policy would require new development to demonstrate compatibility with surrounding historic context. This ensures architectural harmony and helps preserve the rural character of Marion Township.

12. Celebrate and interpret the township's history through signage, programs, and local events.

12.1 Support and promote school programs that explore local history and connect students with longtime residents.

A school partnership initiative would support classroom projects and oral history programs that connect students with longtime residents. These activities promote local heritage, intergenerational learning, and pride in Marion Township's rural history.

12.2 Partner with nearby municipalities to create interpretive signage or driving tours highlighting legacy farms.

A regional heritage project would install interpretive signage and create driving tours that highlight legacy farms. Partnering with nearby municipalities promotes rural tourism and celebrates Marion Township's agricultural history.

12.3 Host an annual public engagement event in Marion Township to involve residents with tools to understand development in the region better.

An annual public engagement event would provide residents with information on local development, land use, and planning tools. This fosters transparency, encourages dialogue, and builds community awareness in Marion Township.

Community Event
Source: Marion Township
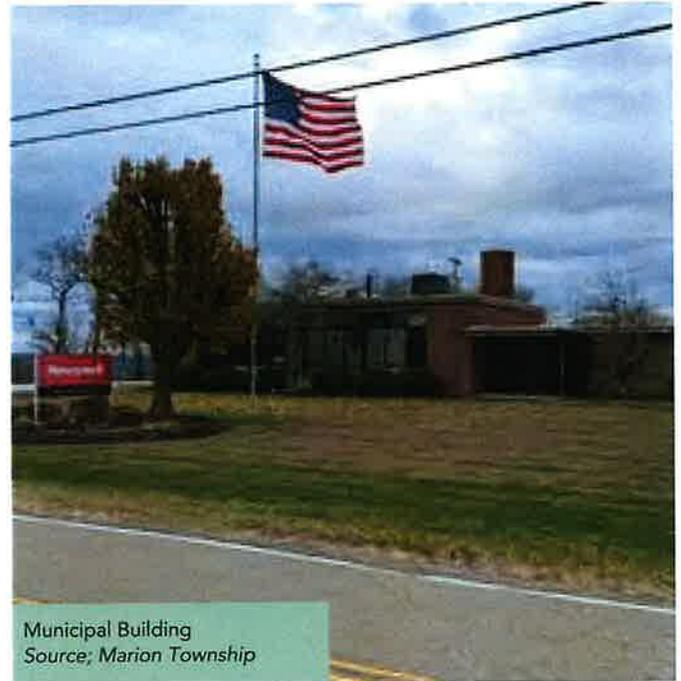
Municipal Building
Source: Marion Township

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recreation, Connectivity, and Well-Being

Expanding parks, trails, and safe travel routes enhances both health and community life. Strengthened connections between neighborhoods, schools, and natural areas will create a more active and accessible region. Recreation and connectivity are essential to long-term well-being.

Recommendations

13. Identify opportunities to preserve land or partner with neighbors for new public or semi-public recreational areas.

13.1 Strengthen regional collaboration to plan for open space connectivity.

A regional collaboration initiative would coordinate open space planning across neighboring municipalities. This approach supports funding efforts, improves connectivity, and advances long-term conservation goals in Marion Township.

13.2 Expand public access to waterways in an environmentally sensitive way.

A water access initiative would identify and develop low-impact sites for fishing, kayaking, or nature access. Environmentally sensitive design ensures public enjoyment while protecting streambanks and habitats in Marion Township.

13.3 Coordinate with regional partners to connect open space to countywide greenway systems.

A coordination effort with regional partners would align Marion Township's open space priorities with countywide greenway plans. This expands trail connections, enhances recreational access, and strengthens regional conservation efforts.

Woodlands
Source; Marion Township

13.4 Require developers to dedicate trail corridors or public access easements in new projects.

A development requirement would mandate that new projects include trail corridors or public access easements. This ensures future growth contributes to Marion Township's trail network and open space connectivity.
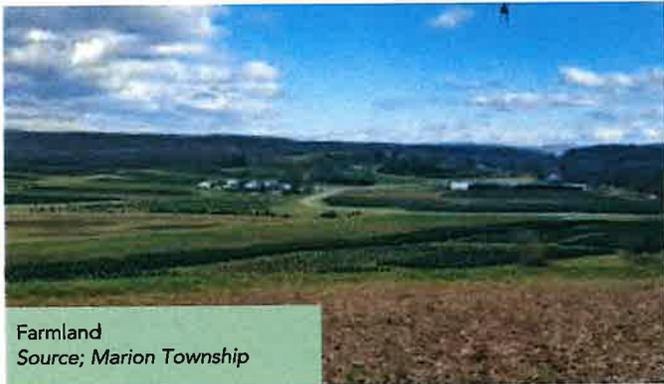
Farmland
Source; Marion Township

14. Prioritize shoulder improvements, shared-use paths, and safe crossings to enhance walkability and biking access.

14.1 Apply for PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED grants to fund bike and pedestrian improvements and complete gaps.

A grant-seeking initiative would pursue state funding to design and build bike and pedestrian infrastructure. This helps Marion Township close critical network gaps and improve safety for non-motorized users.

14.2 Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.

A walkability audit would assess pedestrian infrastructure near schools, parks, and other key destinations. Findings would guide safety upgrades and help Marion Township prioritize projects for grant funding and implementation.

MARION TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

14.3 Require a standardized sidewalk or shared-use path as part of all new developments.

A development standard would require all new projects to include sidewalks or shared-use paths. This ensures consistent pedestrian connectivity and supports long-term mobility goals in Marion Township.

15. Encourage future development patterns that incorporate green space, trails, and community gathering areas.

15.1 Update subdivision regulations to require open space or trail linkages in major subdivisions.

A subdivision regulation update would require major developments to include open space or trail connections. This promotes walkability, protects natural areas, and enhances community livability in Marion Township.

15.2 Draft and adopt a conservation subdivision ordinance to encourage open space preservation in new residential developments.

A conservation subdivision ordinance would allow homes to be clustered on part of a site while preserving the remaining land as permanent open space. This balances residential growth with farmland and natural resource protection in Marion Township.

Solstice Advanced Material US
Source; Marion Township

Farmland
Source; Marion Township

Recommendations	Actions
1.1: Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district with minimum residential lot sizes greater than 5 acres that discourage fragmentation of farmland.	• Amend the zoning ordinance to set a minimum lot size of at least 5 acres in the Agricultural/ Residential district. • Amend the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, Article VIII Design Standards, Section 801 Land Requirements, to require subdivisions to be located along non-major arterial roadways and less productive soils, preserving large interior tracts of farmland as contiguous and functional agricultural areas. • Amend the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to establish a point-based incentive system that expedites the review process for projects that preserve at least 20% of the land as contiguous farmland, in addition to meeting existing recreation space requirements.
1.2: Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.	• Establish a township outreach program in coordination with Beaver County to provide information sessions, application assistance, and property tax benefit guidance for landowners eligible for ALPB and Clean & Green enrollment. • Designate a township staff member or planning commission representative to assist property owners with completing ALPB and Clean & Green applications and to connect them with county staff. • Incorporate program promotion into the township website, newsletters, and tax bill inserts to ensure broad outreach to eligible landowners.
1.3 Strengthen participation in and promote the Beaver County Agricultural Land Preservation Board to permanently protect farmland through conservation easements.	• Compile and map existing data on soil quantity, farm size, and proximity to preserved parcels using USDA Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) and Beaver County resources, and share the analysis with Beaver County ALPB to help guide conservation easement outreach. • Assist landowners and the Beaver County ALPB in preparing applications for state and federal farmland preservation programs such as the Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation and USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) by providing letters of support, helping compile required local data, and identifying matching funds to leverage county preservation dollars. • Develop a farmland preservation outreach campaign by mailing informational packets to all agricultural landowners and posting program details on the township's website.
2.1: Adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek and Connoquenessing Creek.	• Draft ordinance language requiring minimum buffer widths and native vegetation along waterways. • Adopt riparian buffer protections into the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. • Partner with conservation groups and outside funding sources to support restoration and landowner education.
2.2: Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.	• Compile GIS data to map steep slopes, floodplains, and other sensitive areas. • Draft ordinance updates limiting development in mapped areas to reduce hazards. • Pursue conservation partnerships and external funding to protect high-priority parcels through easements or acquisitions.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations

Actions

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
2.3: Create a land stewardship program in partnership with county and regional entities to implement best practices for preserving agricultural and natural land, supported by outside grant funding.	• Establish a township–county collaboration to provide training and technical assistance to landowners. • Develop voluntary stewardship agreements that include incentives, such as streamlined approvals or recognition programs. • Apply for outside funding to implement pilot projects demonstrating effective conservation practices.
3.1 Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.	• Draft shared roadway design standards that reflect rural character and preserve scenic views. • Adopt consistent standards across municipalities through intergovernmental agreements. • Incorporate the standards into local subdivision and land development ordinances.
3.2: Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.	• Draft a model ordinance in coordination with adjacent municipalities. • Adopt the ordinance locally and encourage neighboring communities to do the same. • Create a monitoring process to ensure compliance and replanting when tree removal occurs.
3.3 Revise the zoning code to prevent cul-de-sac and strip development patterns in agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.	• Draft ordinance amendments prohibiting cul-de-sacs except where required by topography. • Adopt subdivision standards that encourage interconnected street networks. • Apply design guidelines to discourage strip-style development and promote clustered layouts.
3.4 Draft and adopt siting and screening standards for new buildings to blend with rural surroundings.	• Draft ordinance language requiring new construction to include screening, landscaping, and appropriate setbacks. • Adopt design review criteria into the zoning ordinance for projects in rural districts. • Provide applicants with design guidance materials to encourage compatibility with the township's rural identity.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
4.1 Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure.	• Draft ordinance language requiring documentation of utility and roadway connections in subdivision applications. • Adopt review standards that discourage development in areas lacking adequate services. • Monitor approvals to ensure compliance with infrastructure proximity requirements.
4.2: Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.	• Establish a regular coordination schedule with providers to exchange data on system capacity. • Compile township-level service maps to identify growth areas supported by infrastructure. • Use data to inform zoning updates and subdivision approvals.
4.3: Through the future land use map, identify priority growth areas near existing water and sewer infrastructure.	• Draft growth area designations within the township's future land use map. • Adopt the updated land use map as part of the comprehensive planning process. • Link capital improvement planning to identified priority growth areas.
5.1 Permit small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural zoning districts.	• Draft zoning amendments clarifying permitted uses in rural districts. • Adopt updates through public hearings and ordinance revision. • Provide educational materials to property owners on allowable business activities.
5.2 Establish a streamlined tiered permitting process that allows no- and minimal-impact home occupations to be approved administratively, using clear performance standards and online applications to reduce barriers for rural entrepreneurs.	• Draft tiered performance standards that distinguish no-, low-, and moderate-impact home occupations. • Adopt procedures for administrative approval of low-impact uses. • Launch an online permitting process to simplify applications.
5.3: Update permitted uses in the A-1 Residential Agriculture District (PRD Allowed) and R-1 Residential District (PRD Allowed) to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services.	• Draft ordinance revisions to expand permitted uses. • Adopt updated use tables following the planning commission review and public comment. • Monitor use approvals to ensure compatibility with residential surroundings.

Recommendations	Actions
Marion Township Implementation Strategies	
5.4: Establish performance-based site standards as part of broader Design Standards in the ordinance (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.	• Draft design standards addressing storage, signage, and hours of operation. • Adopt standards into zoning and subdivision ordinances. • Provide applicants with design guidance materials to encourage compliance.
6.1: Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.	• Draft a shared framework with neighboring municipalities for open space planning. • Pursue external funding and partnerships to support plan creation. • Adopt the final plan into township policy for implementation.
6.2: Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.	• Draft a resolution mandating review of planning documents every five years. • Adopt a review schedule into township policy and assign responsibility. • Publish review findings for public transparency and accountability.
6.3: Partner with the County to track building permits and land conversions annually to assess development trends.	• Formalize data-sharing agreements with the County to obtain annual reports. • Compile township-level development trend reports each year. • Use data findings to adjust zoning and policy as needed.
6.4 Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.	• Draft ordinance language defining thresholds for rezonings that trigger assessments. • Adopt standards requiring applicants to analyze infrastructure, fiscal, and community impacts. • Require assessments as part of the development review process.

Recommendations	Actions
7.1: Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.	• Partner with regional planners to draft sample ordinance language that enables multi-generational housing. • Facilitate public workshops to build support for family-oriented housing models. • Encourage pilot projects in collaboration with private developers and nonprofits.
7.2: Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.	• Coordinate with lenders to expand financing options for intergenerational farm transfers. • Provide technical assistance for landowners on succession planning resources. • Encourage partnerships with extension services and county agencies to host educational programs.
7.3: Amend the zoning ordinance to specify permitted accessory uses by right, including accessory dwelling units, to provide clarity and support diversified land use in the A-1, R-1, and CN districts.	• Draft zoning amendments that clearly define accessory dwelling unit (ADU) standards. • Adopt ordinance updates following public hearings and stakeholder input. • Educate residents on ADU opportunities through township communication tools.
7.4: Permit cottage court home arrangements in zoning districts near main streets or commercial corridors to provide middle housing options.	• Draft ordinance language permitting cottage court housing in designated areas. • Establish design standards for shared open space, pedestrian access, and parking. • Adopt ordinance revisions and encourage use through incentives such as streamlined approvals.
8.1: Prioritize road maintenance and stormwater upgrades in older neighborhoods.	• Conduct an infrastructure audit to identify high-need areas. • Develop a phased improvement plan tied to available funding. • Pursue external funding sources to implement stormwater and road upgrades.
8.2: Update zoning to buffer residential zones from noise- or traffic-generating land uses.	• Draft buffer requirements for landscaping, setbacks, and screening in zoning updates. • Adopt ordinance amendments to ensure consistent protections. • Review new development applications for compatibility with residential areas.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

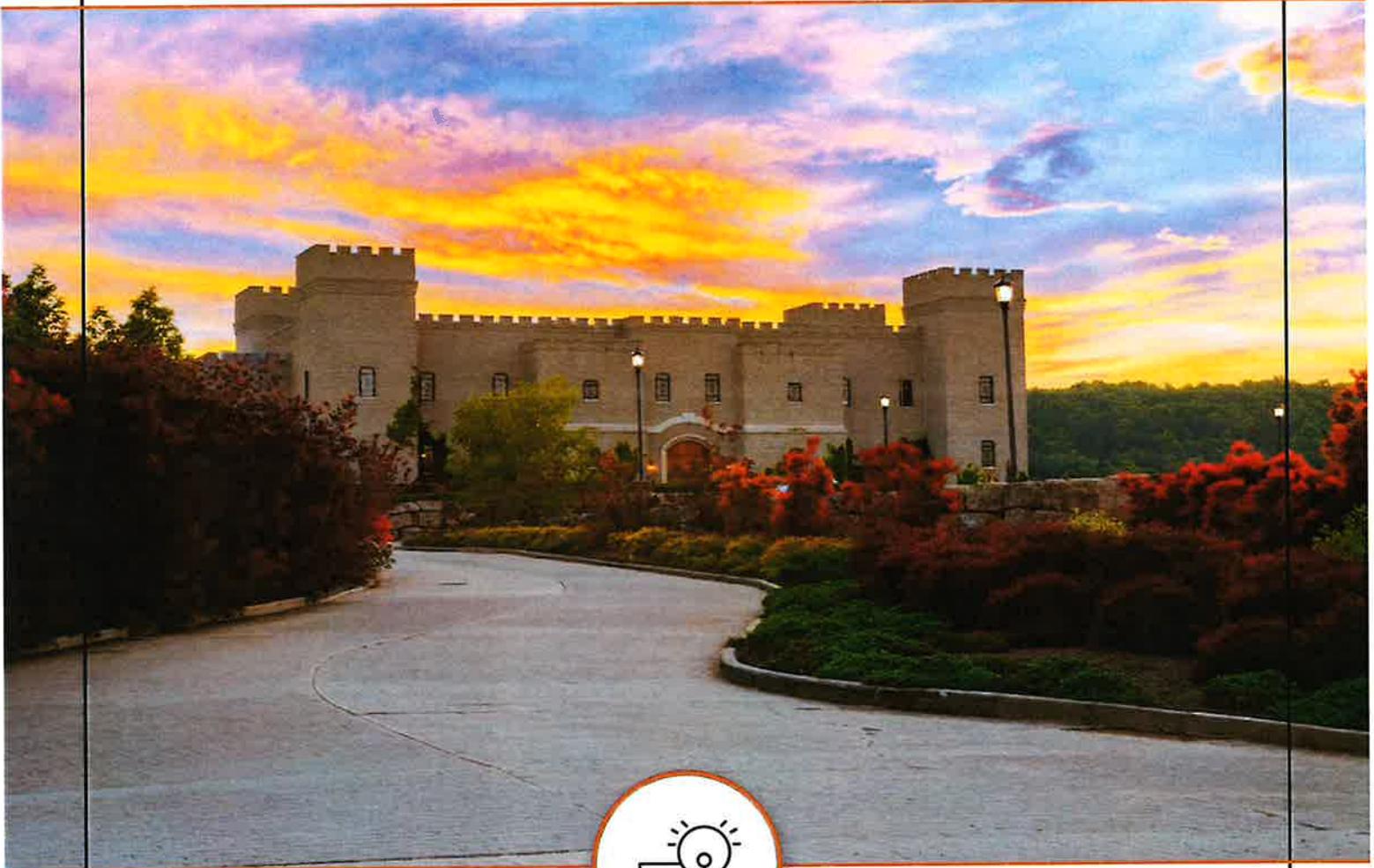| Recommendations	Actions
8.3: Hold annual coordination meetings with emergency service providers to assess needs.	• Schedule joint meetings with fire, EMS, and police providers. • Track response time data and facility needs on an annual basis. • Adjust township capital planning based on service provider input.
8.4: Apply for Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program for environmentally sensitive drainage in rural areas.	• Identify priority rural roads with recurring drainage issues. • Draft concept plans for low-impact drainage solutions. • Pursue external funding partnerships to implement improvements.
8.5: Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances and stabilize existing neighborhoods.	• Review property maintenance and nuisance ordinances for clarity and effectiveness. • Establish consistent enforcement procedures with timelines for compliance. • Provide education and outreach to encourage voluntary compliance.
9.1: Partner to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.	• Collaborate with schools and civic organizations to recruit participants. • Create a program framework with clear roles and mentorship opportunities. • Recognize youth contributions through annual township events or awards.
9.2: Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.	• Draft clear guidance and application forms for interested residents. • Post opportunities regularly on township communication channels. • Hold informational sessions to encourage participation.
9.3: Develop a township newsletter and a monitored online platform to share updates and gather feedback.	• Launch a quarterly newsletter with project updates and engagement opportunities. • Create an interactive online platform for residents to submit feedback. • Assign township staff to monitor communications and ensure timely responses.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
10.1 Partner and pursue grant funding to inventory historic barns, cemeteries, and homesteads for potential protection or reuse.	• Collaborate with historical societies and regional partners to conduct a township-wide inventory. • Pursue external funding opportunities to support documentation and mapping efforts. • Develop a database to track properties with preservation or reuse potential.
10.2: Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.	• Identify candidate properties with architectural or cultural significance. • Provide technical assistance to property owners interested in pursuing eligibility. • Partner with regional preservation organizations to guide nomination processes.
10.3: Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings, with permission from property owners.	• Draft ordinance language authorizing a local tax abatement program. • Adopt the ordinance following public hearings and property owner feedback. • Promote program benefits through township newsletters and outreach.
11.1: Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.	• Draft rural design guidelines in collaboration with nearby communities. • Align township ordinances with regional architectural standards. • Distribute guidelines to property owners and developers as a reference tool.
11.2: Provide expedited review and possible code standard exemptions for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.	• Establish a "fast-track" permitting process for preservation-focused projects. • Draft code amendments that allow flexibility for projects retaining historic character. • Publicize streamlined review opportunities to encourage participation.
11.3: Integrate historical compatibility criteria into the site plan review process.	• Draft site plan review standards that emphasize compatibility with historic context. • Train planning commission members to evaluate applications against criteria. • Require applicants to submit renderings showing alignment with the township's character.
12.1: Support and promote school programs that explore local history and connect students with longtime residents.	• Partner with schools to integrate township history into classroom projects. • Facilitate oral history programs linking students with older residents. • Showcase student projects through township communication platforms.
12.2: Partner with nearby municipalities to create interpretive signage or driving tours highlighting legacy farms.	• Identify key farmsteads and heritage landscapes for inclusion in tours. • Pursue partnerships and funding to design and install interpretive signage. • Collaborate with tourism agencies to market heritage tours.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
12.3: Host an annual public engagement event in Marion Township to involve residents with tools to understand development in the region better.	• Plan an annual event combining historical exhibits with community dialogue on growth. • Partner with civic groups and volunteers to organize and promote the event. • Provide educational materials linking preservation goals to township development.
13.1: Strengthen regional collaboration to plan for open space connectivity.	• Draft a joint planning framework with neighboring townships and the County. • Pursue funding partnerships to complete the plan. • Adopt the final plan into township policy to guide zoning and subdivision decisions.
13.2: Expand public access to waterways in an environmentally sensitive way.	• Identify priority access sites that minimize environmental disturbance. • Partner with landowners and civic groups to support siting and maintenance. • Pursue funding to design and implement access improvements.
13.3: Coordinate with regional partners to connect open space to countywide greenway systems.	• Engage in regional greenway planning meetings to align township priorities. • Draft intermunicipal agreements for long-term trail maintenance. • Market greenway connections as part of a broader regional recreation network.
13.4: Require developers to dedicate trail corridors or public access easements in new projects.	• Draft ordinance updates requiring trail or easement dedication as part of subdivision approvals • Map priority corridors to guide where dedications are most beneficial. • Adopt the ordinance and integrate requirements into the review process.
14.1: Apply for PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED grants to fund bike and pedestrian improvements and complete gaps.	• Identify gaps in the existing sidewalk and trail network. • Prepare conceptual designs to strengthen grant applications. • Pursue partnerships with schools and civic groups to demonstrate community needs.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
14.2: Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.	• Draft an audit framework to evaluate sidewalks, crossings, and lighting. • Engage the public to identify areas of concern. • Prioritize quick-build and low-cost improvements for early implementation.
14.3: Require a standardized sidewalk or shared-use path as part of all new developments.	• Draft subdivision regulations mandating sidewalks or shared-use paths. • Adopt the standards and apply them consistently in project reviews. • Provide flexibility for rural-appropriate designs while maintaining connectivity.
15.1: Update subdivision regulations to require open space or trail linkages in major subdivisions.	• Draft ordinance amendments that establish open space requirements. • Adopt the updates into the subdivision ordinance. • Monitor compliance to ensure meaningful open space and linkages.
15.2: Draft and adopt a conservation subdivision ordinance to encourage open space preservation in new residential developments.	• Draft ordinance language allowing clustered housing with preserved open space. • Adopt the ordinance through the comprehensive review process. • Promote conservation subdivisions as a cost-effective way to preserve rural character.

Marion Township Implementation Strategies

NORTH SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP
RECOMMENDATIONS

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural Character and Open Space

Preserving farmland, woodlands, and open views is central to the Tri-Township identity. Future development will respect the rural landscape by concentrating growth near existing infrastructure to maintain agricultural viability. Conservation of land and natural resources ensures the area's beauty and heritage remain defining strengths.

Recommendations

1. **Discourage large-lot sprawl and preserve open landscapes by directing development away from core farmland and ridge views**

    1.1 Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district to discourage fragmentation of farmland.

    A zoning amendment would increase minimum lot sizes in agricultural areas to reduce farmland fragmentation and sprawling development. This helps preserve large, contiguous tracts of farmland and supports North Sewickley Township's rural character.

    1.2 Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.

    A partnership with Beaver County would promote ALPB and Clean & Green program enrollment through outreach, education, and application support. This helps North Sewickley Township protect farmland and provide financial incentives to agricultural landowners.

    1.3 Encourage voluntary participation in existing agricultural preservation programs and privately funded grant-supported conservation easements.

    Encouraging voluntary participation in existing agricultural preservation programs and privately funded, grant-supported conservation easements permanently limits development on participating farmland, helping preserve rural landscapes and support long-term agricultural use without Township funding.

Connoquenessing Creek
Source: SPC Water Resource Center

1.4 Direct business growth to existing commercial zones to reduce development pressure on rural and agricultural land.

A growth management strategy would guide new business development into designated commercial zones. This protects agricultural land, preserves rural character, and encourages more efficient use of infrastructure in North Sewickley Township.

2. **Safeguard steep slopes, forested areas and, Connoquenessing Creek through conservation standards and sensitive development practices.**

    2.1 Adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek, Beaver River, and Connoquenessing Creek as a capital improvement to mitigate flood risk.

    A riparian protection and flood mitigation effort would establish buffer requirements along waterways. These actions improve water quality, reduce erosion and flooding, and protect natural habitats in North Sewickley Township.

Farmland
Source: LandSearch

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

2.2 Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.

A land conservation initiative would map flood-prone and steep-slope areas and restrict development in those zones. Preserving these sensitive lands helps reduce hazards and supports open space preservation in North Sewickley Township.
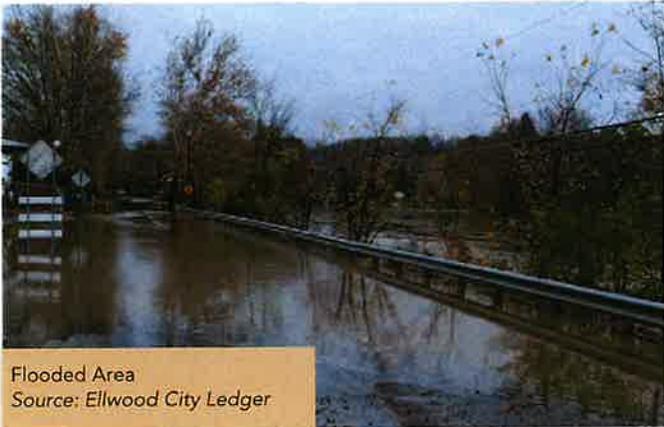
2.3 Create a land stewardship program in partnership with county and regional entities to implement best practices for preserving agricultural and natural land, supported by outside grant funding.

A land stewardship program would offer education, technical support, and incentives for property owners to implement conservation practices. Partnering with county and regional entities allows North Sewickley Township to leverage grant funding and promote sustainable land management.
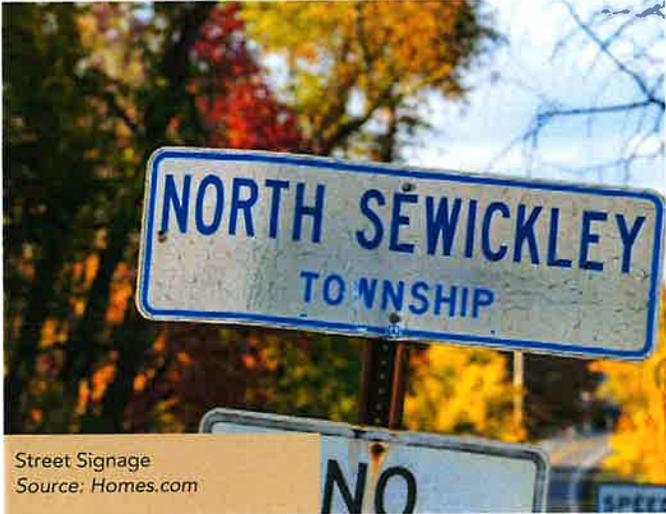
3. **Update zoning to require rural-appropriate lot sizes, buffers, and siting standards in areas beyond the PA-65 corridor.**

3.1 Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.

A regional road standards initiative would set limits on curb cuts, signage height, and lighting in rural zones. These updates help preserve scenic views, maintain rural character, and improve roadway safety in North Sewickley Township.

Street Signage
Source: Homes.com

3.2 Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.

A tree preservation ordinance would require developers to retain or replace trees along scenic corridors. Partnering with nearby municipalities ensures consistent protections that maintain canopy cover and rural aesthetics in North Sewickley Township.

3.3 Reduce suburban-style layouts that conflict with agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.

A zoning update would discourage suburban-style development by requiring clustered layouts and connected road networks. This approach protects open space, maintains farmland, and reinforces North Sewickley Township's rural land use goals.

3.4 Draft and adopt siting and screening standards for new buildings to blend with rural surroundings.

Siting and screening standards would require new development to use setbacks, landscaping, and appropriate design elements to blend with the rural setting. These tools help maintain North Sewickley Township's visual character and scenic quality.

Flooded Area
Source: Ellwood City Ledger

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

Balanced and Strategic Growth

Growth will occur where it supports community character and existing infrastructure. Coordinated land use and zoning across the three townships will direct development to key corridors while preventing outside sprawl. This approach allows for economic and residential expansion without sacrificing open space or small-town scale.

Recommendations

4. Concentrate new development near infrastructure to protect open land and reduce long-term maintenance burdens.

4.1 Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure.

A subdivision requirement would mandate that new developments be located near existing utilities and road networks. This reduces infrastructure costs, prevents sprawl, and supports orderly growth in North Sewickley Township.

4.2 Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.

A coordination effort with utility providers and PennDOT would ensure North Sewickley Township has accurate infrastructure data. This supports informed planning, guides development approvals, and helps align zoning with service availability.

4.3 Through the future land use map, identify priority growth areas near existing water and sewer infrastructure.

The future land use map update designates areas near existing water and sewer lines as preferred growth zones. This helps North Sewickley Township manage development efficiently and preserve rural and agricultural lands.

New Residential Development
Source: DR Horton

4.4 Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances and stabilize existing neighborhoods.

A code enforcement initiative would update property maintenance regulations, establish clear procedures, and promote compliance. This helps stabilize neighborhoods, maintain property values, and support community pride in North Sewickley Township.

New Home
Source: Zillow

5. Encourage rural-friendly businesses such as contractors, trades, and farm-based enterprises in suitable locations along key corridors.

5.1 Permit small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural zoning districts.

A zoning amendment would allow small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural districts. This supports North Sewickley Township's rural economy while preserving compatibility with surrounding land uses.

5.2 Streamline approval processes for home occupations with minimal impacts.

A streamlined permitting process would allow low-impact home occupations to be approved administratively using clear performance standards. This reduces barriers for entrepreneurs while maintaining neighborhood compatibility in North Sewickley Township.

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3 Update permitted uses in rural and commercial zoning districts to allow trades and agricultural services.

A zoning update would revise use tables in rural and commercial districts to include low-impact trades and agricultural services. This expands local business opportunities while supporting North Sewickley Township's rural character.
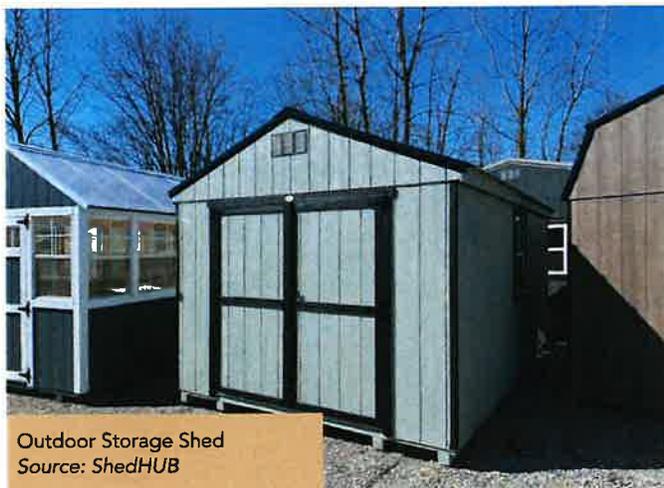
5.4 Establish performance-based site standards (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.

Performance-based standards would regulate elements like storage, signage, and business hours to reduce conflicts and visual impacts. These tools ensure rural businesses remain compatible with surrounding uses in North Sewickley Township.
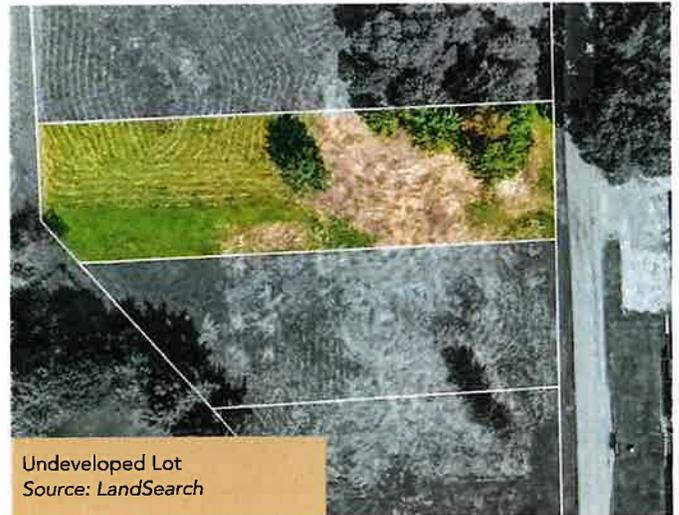
6. Update zoning to require rural-appropriate lot sizes, buffers, and siting standards in areas beyond the PA-65 corridor.

6.1 Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.

A joint open space and land preservation plan would coordinate priorities, benchmarks, and strategies across neighboring municipalities. This helps North Sewickley Township protect critical lands, pursue funding, and guide growth through regional collaboration.

Undeveloped Lot
Source: LandSearch

6.2 Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

A five-year review cycle would ensure North Sewickley Township's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance remain current. Regular updates allow the township to respond to changing conditions, track progress, and adjust policies as needed.

6.3 Plan future access easements in undeveloped lots to direct traffic onto main roads and prevent dead ends.

A future access easement policy would require subdivisions to include planned connections to main roads. This prevents dead ends, improves circulation, and supports efficient road networks in North Sewickley Township.

6.4 Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.

A rezoning ordinance would require community impact assessments for large land use changes. These assessments evaluate infrastructure, traffic, and fiscal impacts to help North Sewickley Township make informed development decisions.

Outdoor Storage Shed
Source: ShedHUB

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Roots and Family Life

The Tri-Township area values close relationships, strong families, and civic involvement. The plan supports housing, schools, and gathering places that let residents stay connected across generations. Reinforcing these roots keeps the community welcoming and family oriented.

Recommendations

7. Enable accessory dwellings, family subdivisions, and multi-generational housing arrangements to help families stay local.

7.1 Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.

A regional housing initiative would explore flexible models like duplexes and shared family homes. These housing types support multi-generational living and help families stay in North Sewickley Township across life stages.

7.2 Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.

A farm succession initiative would connect landowners with lenders, legal tools, and regional partners to support intergenerational land transfers. This helps preserve North Sewickley Township's agricultural base and prevent fragmentation of family-owned farms.

7.3 Expand zoning flexibility to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential and agricultural zones.

A zoning amendment would permit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential and agricultural zones. This provides flexible housing options, supports multi-generational living, and helps residents remain in North Sewickley Township.
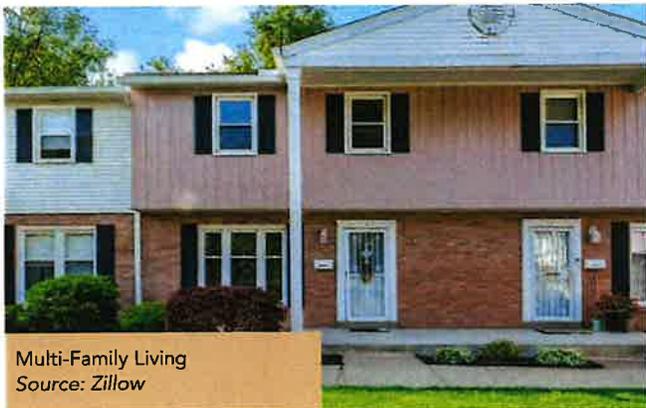
Multi-Family Living
Source: Zillow

7.4 Permit cottage court home arrangements in certain zoning districts.

A zoning provision would allow cottage court developments with small homes arranged around shared open space. This creates a rural-appropriate middle housing option and expands housing diversity in North Sewickley Township.

Roadway Improvement
Source: North Sewickley Township

8. Invest in targeted road, drainage, and safety improvements that benefit established and growing neighborhoods.

8.1 Utilize state technical assistance funding to hire a consultant to conduct a township-wide infrastructure assessment to prioritize needs.

A state-funded infrastructure assessment would evaluate roads, stormwater systems, and public facilities across North Sewickley Township. The results would guide capital improvement planning and help prioritize investments based on safety, condition, and cost.

8.2 Prioritize and fund roadway maintenance, including year-round repairs and winter servicing, and implement modern roundabouts in place of traffic signals where feasible to improve safety, efficiency, and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

A roadway improvement program would fund regular maintenance and winter servicing while promoting roundabouts over signals where feasible. These updates improve traffic safety, reduce long-term costs, and enhance mobility in North Sewickley Township.

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

8.3 Apply for Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program for environmentally sensitive drainage in rural areas.

Participation in Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program would fund drainage improvements on unpaved roads using environmentally sensitive methods. This reduces erosion, protects water quality, and lowers maintenance costs in rural areas of North Sewickley Township.

8.4 Incorporate stormwater management upgrades and water line replacements into a Capital Improvement Plan for areas with known flooding or runoff issues.

A Capital Improvement Plan would prioritize stormwater upgrades and water line replacements in flood-prone areas. This ensures North Sewickley Township can proactively address infrastructure vulnerabilities and improve long-term service reliability.

9. Create avenues for residents to participate in planning, decision-making, and township-sponsored events.

9.1 Partner to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.

A youth advisory or ambassador program would engage local students in civic activities and leadership roles. Partnering with nearby municipalities allows North Sewickley Township to amplify youth voices and encourage future community involvement.
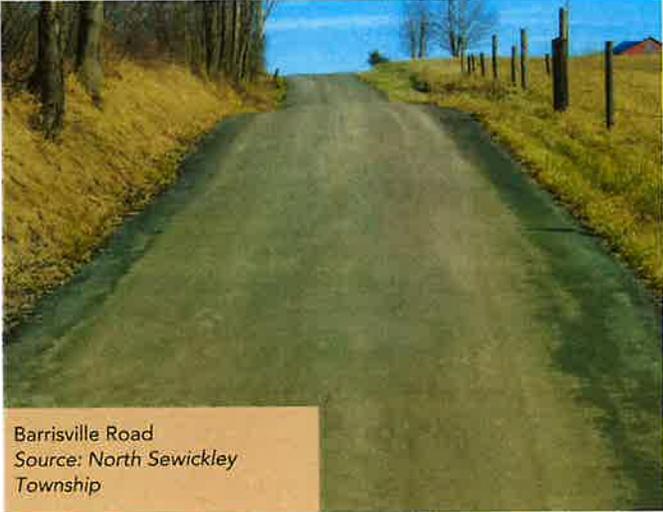
Barrisville Road
Source: North Sewickley Township

9.2 Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.

An outreach initiative would provide clear information and streamlined applications for township boards and commissions. This helps North Sewickley Township attract diverse participants and strengthen community representation in local governance.

9.3 Develop a township newsletter and a monitored online platform to share updates and gather feedback.

A township newsletter and online engagement platform would keep residents informed and allow two-way communication. These tools improve transparency, build trust, and encourage community feedback in North Sewickley Township.

9.4 Host an annual public engagement event to involve local residents with tools to better understand development in the region.

An annual engagement event would give residents access to maps, data, and planning tools to understand regional development. This fosters transparency, educates the public, and builds trust in North Sewickley Township's planning efforts.

Clean Up Day
Source: EllwoodCity.Org

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Preservation and Pride

Historic buildings, farmsteads, and landmarks embody the Tri-Township's heritage. Protecting and reusing these assets preserves local character and fosters civic pride. New development should reflect the area's history, ensuring the past remains visible in the regions future.

Recommendations

10. Inventory historic resources and pursue options for preservation, including reuse, conservation, or local recognition.

10.1 Partner and pursue grant funding to inventory historic barns, cemeteries, and homesteads for potential protection or reuse.

A historic resource inventory project would document barns, cemeteries, and homesteads throughout North Sewickley Township. Pursuing grant funding supports preservation planning and helps identify opportunities for protection or adaptive reuse.

10.2 Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.

A National Register eligibility effort would assist property owners in nominating historic structures. Recognition provides access to funding opportunities and encourages preservation of significant buildings in North Sewickley Township.

10.3 Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings.

A local tax abatement program would temporarily reduce property taxes for owners who invest in restoring or maintaining historic structures. This incentive encourages preservation, supports reinvestment, and helps protect North Sewickley Township's architectural heritage.

Clow Farmhouse
Source: Beaver County History Online
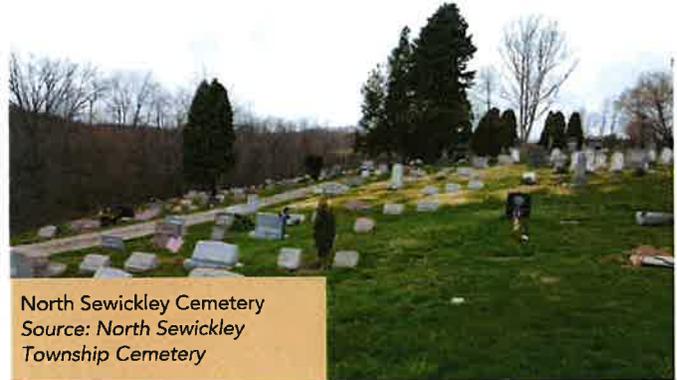
North Sewickley Cemetery
Source: North Sewickley Township Cemetery

11. Explore overlay districts or design guidance to help maintain the architectural character of historic sites.

11.1 Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.

A regional design recommendation initiative would define appropriate rural styles and materials for major residential land developments. Partnering with neighboring municipalities and the state ensures consistent development that reflects North Sewickley Township's rural character.

11.2 Provide expedited review for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.

An expedited review program would fast-track approvals for projects that preserve original architectural features in older buildings. This reduces barriers to preservation and encourages reinvestment in North Sewickley Township's historic structures.

11.3 Integrate historical compatibility design recommendations into the preliminary plan review process.

A site plan review policy would include criteria to ensure new development complements the scale, materials, and character of nearby historic structures. This supports preservation goals and protects community identity in North Sewickley Township.

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Create avenues for residents to participate in planning, decision-making, and township-sponsored events.

12.1 Support and promote school programs that explore local history and connect students with longtime residents.

A school partnership initiative would support programs that teach local history and connect students with longtime residents. These activities promote intergenerational learning, preserve oral histories, and strengthen community pride in North Sewickley Township.

12.2 Partner with nearby municipalities to create interpretive signage or driving tours highlighting legacy farms.

A heritage tourism project would install interpretive signage and develop driving tours to highlight legacy farms. Partnering with nearby municipalities promotes regional identity and celebrates North Sewickley Township's agricultural heritage.

Windows Through History
Source: Beaver County Time

12.3 Require the township to hold town hall meetings with residents to provide opportunities for public input and questions prior to making decisions on projects.

A town hall meeting requirement would ensure residents have opportunities to ask questions and share input before major project decisions are made. This promotes transparency, builds trust, and strengthens public engagement in North Sewickley Township.

12.4 Establish a requirement for the township to conduct annual reviews of park infrastructure to ensure adequate maintenance of walking trails.

An annual park infrastructure review would assess trail conditions and maintenance needs across township parks. This ensures walking trails remain safe, accessible, and well-maintained for residents in North Sewickley Township.

Brush Creek Park
Source: Beaver County Tourism

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recreation, Connectivity, and Well-Being

Expanding parks, trails and safe travel routes enhances both healthy and community life. Strengthened connections between neighborhoods, schools, and natural areas will create a more active and accessible region. Recreation and connectivity are essential to long-term well-being

Recommendations

13. Identify ways to provide more access to Connoquenessing Creek, trails, and natural open space for residents.

13.1 Complete a Tri-Township Open Space and Trail Plan in coordination with Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan.

A joint open space plan would identify priority connections and shared goals across all three townships. Coordinating with Beaver County Greenways ensures regional alignment and guides long-term trail and open space development in North Sewickley Township.

13.2 Expand public access to the Connoquenessing Creek in environmentally sensitive ways.

A public access initiative would identify and develop low-impact access points along the Connoquenessing Creek. These improvements allow for recreational use while protecting water quality and natural habitats in North Sewickley Township.

13.3 Collaborate with park agencies to enhance onsite amenities such as pavilions for gathering spaces, kayak launch areas, and install bollards at trail entrances to limit bike access for pedestrian safety.

A parks collaboration would enhance local facilities by adding gathering spaces, kayak launches, and bollards at trail entrances. These upgrades improve usability and safety for pedestrians while supporting outdoor recreation in North Sewickley Township.

Bike Trail
Source: Pennsylvania Tourism Office

14. Target safe walking and biking improvements near schools, churches, and community facilities.

14.1 Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.

A walkability audit would evaluate pedestrian infrastructure near key destinations and high-risk areas. The findings would guide targeted safety improvements and support funding efforts to enhance walkability in North Sewickley Township.

14.2 Apply for PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED grants to fund bike and pedestrian improvements and complete gaps.

A grant initiative would pursue funding from PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED to build bike and pedestrian infrastructure. These improvements would close network gaps and promote active transportation in North Sewickley Township.

14.3 Require a standardized sidewalk or shared-use path as part of all new developments.

A development standard would require all new projects to include sidewalks or shared-use paths. This ensures consistent pedestrian connectivity and supports walkability in North Sewickley Township.

Recreation in Brush Creek Park

NORTH SEWICKLEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Promote development that integrates trails, parks, or gathering areas into residential layouts where appropriate.

15.1 Update subdivision regulations to require open space or trail linkages in major subdivisions.

A subdivision regulation update would require major developments to include dedicated open space or trail connections. This promotes access to recreation, supports healthy lifestyles, and preserves green space in North Sewickley Township.

15.2 Encourage subdivision designs that preserve open space while allowing compact housing clusters.

A conservation subdivision approach would allow homes to be clustered on part of a site while preserving the remaining land as open space. This balances growth with land conservation in North Sewickley Township.

15.3 Require dedication of trail corridors or public access easements in new developments to link open spaces to the countywide greenway network.

A trail dedication requirement would ensure new developments include corridors or easements that connect to existing or planned greenways. This strengthens regional trail networks and expands recreational access in North Sewickley Township.

Trail Head
Source: Beaver County Times

Open Space
Source: Beaver County Tourism

Recommendations	Actions
1.1: Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district to discourage fragmentation of farmland.	• Draft ordinance amendments requiring minimum residential lot sizes greater than 5 acres for major subdivisions. • Adopt updated zoning standards following public review and hearings. • Monitor development approvals to ensure large-lot sprawl is minimized.
1.2: Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.	• Collaborate with County staff to coordinate outreach to eligible landowners. • Provide technical assistance to support program enrollment. • Promote program benefits through township newsletters, meetings, and mailings.
1.3: Encourage voluntary participation in existing agricultural preservation programs and privately funded grant-supported conservation easements.	• Draft program guidelines in coordination with local farmers and conservation partners. • Support conservation partners pursuing external funding for agricultural easements. • Share information on voluntary, private, and grant-funded farmland preservation options.
1.4: Direct business growth to existing commercial zones to reduce development pressure on rural and agricultural land.	• Designate commercial zones as priority growth areas on the future land use map. • Amend zoning ordinances to encourage business activity in designated areas. • Monitor rezoning requests to ensure commercial development remains within defined zones.
2.1 Adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek, Beaver River, and Connoquenessing Creek as a capital improvement to mitigate flood risk.	• Partner with regional entities to pursue funding for flood risk reduction projects.
2.2: Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.	• Compile GIS data to map sensitive lands and flood-prone areas. • Draft ordinance updates limiting development in steep-slope and floodplain zones. • Partner with conservation groups to preserve high-priority lands through easements or acquisition.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
2.3 Create a land stewardship program in partnership with county and regional entities to implement best practices for preserving agricultural and natural land, supported by outside grant funding.	• Develop a collaborative framework for land stewardship education and support. • Promote voluntary stewardship agreements with landowners. • Pursue outside funding to support pilot conservation projects.
3.1: Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.	• Draft rural road design standards in collaboration with regional partners. • Adopt the standards through zoning and subdivision ordinance updates. • Encourage municipalities to apply standards consistently along shared corridors.
3.2 Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.	• Draft model tree preservation standards with input from multiple municipalities. • Adopt the ordinance locally and encourage regional adoption. • Monitor development projects to ensure compliance with tree preservation requirements.
3.3: Reduce suburban-style layouts that conflict with agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.	• Draft ordinance updates prohibiting cul-de-sacs and strip commercial patterns. • Adopt subdivision standards requiring interconnected road networks. • Promote clustered layouts to preserve farmland and scenic views.
3.4: Draft and adopt siting and screening standards for new buildings to blend with rural surroundings.	• Draft siting and screening standards addressing setbacks, landscaping, and design. • Adopt ordinance updates incorporating context-sensitive criteria. • Provide design guidance materials to property owners and developers.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
4.1 Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure.	• Draft ordinance requirements linking subdivision approval to infrastructure proximity. • Adopt review standards that discourage development in areas lacking adequate services. • Monitor approvals to ensure compliance with proximity requirements.
4.2: Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.	• Establish regular coordination meetings to exchange service and capacity data. • Maintain a township-level map of service areas and planned extensions. • Use data to guide zoning and subdivision approvals.
4.3: Through the future land use map, identify priority growth areas near existing water and sewer infrastructure.	• Draft a growth map designating priority areas for compact development. • Adopt the future land use map as part of the comprehensive plan. • Review development proposals to ensure consistency with mapped growth areas.
4.4: Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances, and helping to stabilize existing neighborhoods.	• Review existing ordinances to close gaps in property maintenance standards. • Establish a consistent enforcement process with timelines for compliance. • Publicize code expectations to encourage voluntary compliance.
5.1: Permit small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural zoning districts.	• Draft zoning amendments clarifying permitted rural business uses. • Adopt updates through the zoning ordinance review process. • Provide educational materials to property owners on allowable activities.
5.2 Streamline approval processes for home occupations with minimal impacts.	• Draft tiered performance standards to distinguish minimal- and moderate-impact uses. • Adopt administrative approval for low-impact businesses. • Develop online tools to make the permitting process accessible.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
5.3: Update permitted uses in rural and commercial zoning districts to allow trades and agricultural services.	• Draft ordinance revisions expanding permitted uses in commercial and rural zones (i.e., AR-1 - Agricultural Residential; B - Business; BT - Business Transition; CC - Corridor Commercial; and MDR - Mixed Density Residential) to allow low-impact trades and agricultural services. • Adopt revised use tables following planning review and hearings. • Monitor approvals to ensure compatibility with rural character.
5.4: Establish performance-based site standards (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.	• Draft design standards regulating storage, hours, and signage. • Adopt standards as part of zoning or design ordinances. • Provide applicants with design guidance to support compliance.
6.1: Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.	• Draft a cooperative framework with neighboring municipalities for open space planning. • Pursue external partnerships and funding to implement the plan. • Adopt the plan into township policy for consistency.
6.2: Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.	• Draft a resolution requiring reviews of planning documents every five years. • Adopt the review schedule and assign responsibility. • Publish findings to ensure accountability and transparency.
6.3: Plan future access easements in undeveloped lots to direct traffic onto main roads and prevent dead ends.	• Draft subdivision standards requiring future access easements in undeveloped lots. • Adopt ordinance updates promoting interconnected street networks. • Review development proposals for compliance with access requirements.
6.4: Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.	• Draft ordinance language defining thresholds that trigger an impact assessment. • Adopt standards requiring applicants to address traffic, infrastructure, and fiscal impacts. • Apply assessments consistently during rezoning reviews.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
7.1: Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.	• Partner with Beaver County planners to draft sample ordinance language for duplexes, co-located family homes, and other flexible housing types. • Host public workshops with residents to explain how multi-generational housing supports affordability and keeps families in the township. • Encourage a pilot project by working with a local developer to test duplex or shared-lot housing models in an appropriate zoning district.
7.2: Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.	• Collaborate with banks and credit unions to create financing options for farm families transitioning property to the next generation. • Organize succession planning workshops in partnership with county extension services and farm bureaus. • Distribute informational packets through tax bills and township newsletters, highlighting tools for land transfer and succession.
7.3: Expand zoning flexibility to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential and agricultural zones.	• Draft zoning ordinance amendments specifying ADUs as permitted by right, including clear standards for size, location, and utilities. • Adopt ordinance updates after a public hearing process to confirm community support. • Publish a "how-to" guide for residents outlining ADU eligibility, permitting steps, and benefits for multi-generational households.
7.4: Permit cottage court home arrangements in certain zoning districts.	• Draft ordinance updates permitting cottage court housing near main roads or commercial corridors, with lot size flexibility to encourage development. • Establish design standards requiring shared open space, pedestrian circulation, and limited parking footprints to preserve rural character. • Adopt zoning revisions and develop incentives, such as expedited approvals or density bonuses, for projects meeting cottage court standards.
8.1: Utilize state technical assistance funding to hire a consultant to conduct a township-wide infrastructure assessment to prioritize needs.	• Apply for technical assistance funding to hire an engineering consultant to evaluate township roads, stormwater systems, and safety infrastructure. • Develop an assessment report that ranks projects based on safety, service life, and cost-effectiveness. • Use the report to create a phased capital improvement schedule tied to realistic funding cycles.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
8.2: Prioritize and fund roadway maintenance, including year-round repairs and winter servicing, and implement modern roundabouts in place of traffic signals where feasible to improve safety, efficiency, and reduce long-term maintenance costs.	• Apply for Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank, Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, and PennDOT funding to improve high-need road segments. • Prioritize high-need road segments for year-round repair, snow removal, and resurfacing. • Draft design standards that encourage alternatives to traditional traffic signals, such as roundabouts, in appropriate intersections. • Adopt updated roadway standards into township ordinances and seek cost-sharing partnerships with PennDOT.
8.3: Apply for Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program for environmentally sensitive drainage in rural areas.	• Map rural roadways with recurring erosion and runoff issues. • Draft subdivision and land development ordinance updates requiring low-impact drainage solutions in new projects. • Apply for external funding to retrofit failing road segments with sustainable drainage designs.
8.4: Incorporate stormwater management upgrades and water line replacements into a Capital Improvement Plan for areas with known flooding or runoff issues.	• Identify residential areas with repeated flooding, runoff, or outdated water infrastructure. • Develop a phased improvement plan that integrates stormwater upgrades with utility replacements. • Adopt the Capital Improvement Plan and align annual budgets with identified projects.
9.1: Partner to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.	• Collaborate with schools, faith groups, and civic organizations to recruit youth representatives. • Develop a formal program structure that includes mentorship, leadership training, and defined responsibilities. • Recognize participants annually through certificates, township meeting acknowledgments, or community events.
9.2: Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.	• Draft a plain-language guide and application process for board and commission membership. • Post vacancies prominently on the township website, newsletters, and community bulletin boards. • Hold an annual "Civic Engagement Night" to introduce residents to volunteer opportunities.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

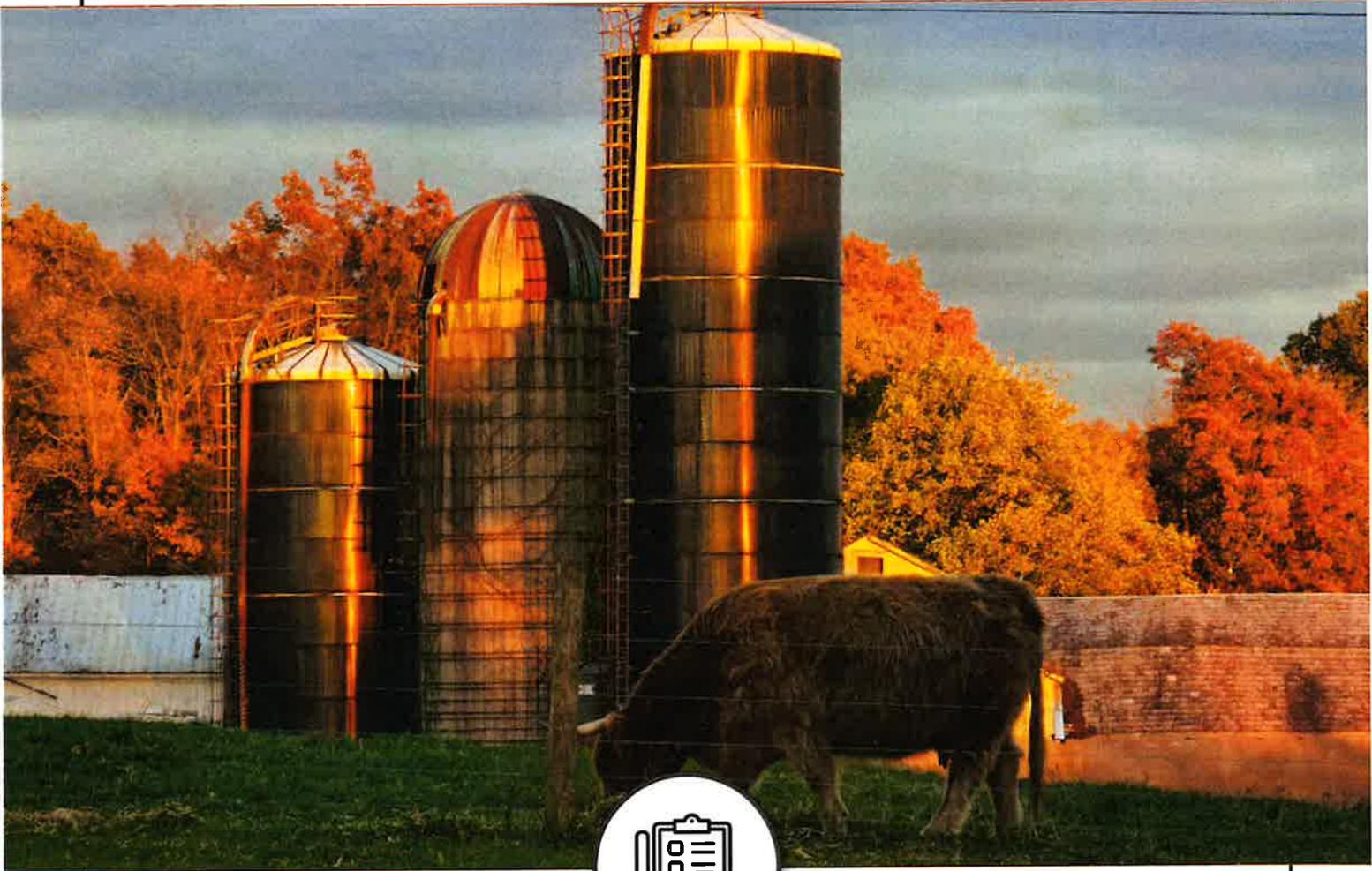| Recommendations	Actions
9.3: Develop a township newsletter and a monitored online platform to share updates and gather feedback.	• Develop a quarterly township newsletter highlighting projects, budgets, and public meetings. • Launch a monitored online platform where residents can provide feedback on township issues. • Assign a staff liaison to track submissions, respond, and report back to elected officials.
9.4: Host an annual public engagement event to involve local residents with tools to better understand development in the region.	• Organize an event that combines historical exhibits, infrastructure updates, and opportunities for public feedback. • Partner with civic groups, businesses, and volunteers to provide programming and sponsorship. • Document community input and report back on how feedback is integrated into township decision-making.
8.4: Incorporate stormwater management upgrades and water line replacements into a Capital Improvement Plan for areas with known flooding or runoff issues.	• Identify residential areas with repeated flooding, runoff, or outdated water infrastructure. • Develop a phased improvement plan that integrates stormwater upgrades with utility replacements. • Adopt the Capital Improvement Plan and align annual budgets with identified projects.
9.1: Partner to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.	• Collaborate with schools, faith groups, and civic organizations to recruit youth representatives. • Develop a formal program structure that includes mentorship, leadership training, and defined responsibilities. • Recognize participants annually through certificates, township meeting acknowledgments, or community events.
9.2: Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.	• Draft a plain-language guide and application process for board and commission membership. • Post vacancies prominently on the township website, newsletters, and community bulletin boards. • Hold an annual "Civic Engagement Night" to introduce residents to volunteer opportunities.

Recommendations	Actions
10.1: Partner and pursue grant funding to inventory historic barns, cemeteries, and homesteads for potential protection or reuse.	• Collaborate with Beaver County and local historical societies to develop a comprehensive inventory of historic properties. • Pursue external funding to support field surveys, mapping, and digital documentation of barns, cemeteries, and homesteads. • Publish the inventory online and integrate it into township planning documents to guide future preservation efforts.
10.2: Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.	• Identify properties that meet criteria for the National Register, such as historic farms or unique architectural structures. • Provide technical assistance to property owners in preparing applications. • Partner with regional preservation organizations to secure letters of support and strengthen applications.
10.3: Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings.	• Draft ordinance language authorizing property tax abatements for qualifying preservation or restoration projects. • Adopt the ordinance following a public input process to ensure community support. • Promote the program through newsletters, real estate networks, and informational workshops for property owners.
11.1: Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.	• Draft regional design guidelines that build on Township Code Ch. 22-601 to include rural-appropriate materials, setbacks, and scale. • Work with Beaver County and state partners to align design guidance with preservation standards. • Share guidelines with developers and property owners through design handbooks and pre-application meetings.
11.2: Provide expedited review for maintaining original architectural features in older structures	• Establish an expedited review track for building permits that retain or restore original features. • Draft code updates provide flexibility for projects that maintain historic architectural elements. • Publicize the faster review process as an incentive for property owners to pursue preservation.
11.3: Integrate historical compatibility design recommendations into the preliminary plan review process.	• Require developers to submit renderings or elevations showing how projects align with the historic or rural context. • Develop a checklist or reference guide to help applicants and reviewers evaluate historic compatibility during preliminary plan review. • Coordinate with local historical resources or preservation partners to inform design recommendations and ensure consistency with community character goals.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
12.1: Support and promote school programs that explore local history and connect students with longtime residents.	• Partner with schools to integrate oral history and local heritage into class projects. • Create opportunities for students to interview longtime residents and present findings publicly. • Highlight student projects through township newsletters and annual community events.
12.2: Partner with nearby municipalities to create interpretive signage or driving tours highlighting legacy farms.	• Identify farms and heritage sites that best represent the township's rural legacy. • Draft a signage and tour plan that incorporates both local and regional historical themes. • Pursue funding partnerships with tourism boards and neighboring municipalities for implementation.
12.3: Require the township to hold town hall meetings with residents to provide opportunities for public input and questions prior to making decisions on projects.	• Require township leaders to host town hall meetings before major project decisions. • Publish agendas and background materials online in advance of town hall events. • Track public comments and provide a written summary of how input influenced final decisions.
12.4: Establish a requirement for the township to conduct annual reviews of park infrastructure to ensure adequate maintenance of walking trails.	• Draft a requirement for annual reviews of township park and trail infrastructure. • Conduct inspections of walking trails, playgrounds, and open space amenities. • Publish an annual report highlighting maintenance needs and improvements completed.
9.2: Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.	• Draft a plain-language guide and application process for board and commission membership. • Post vacancies prominently on the township website, newsletters, and community bulletin boards. • Hold an annual "Civic Engagement Night" to introduce residents to volunteer opportunities.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
13.1: Complete a Tri-Township Open Space Plan in coordination with Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan.	• Draft a cooperative framework with Franklin, Marion, and North Sewickley to identify priority open spaces. • Pursue funding partnerships to complete the planning document. • Adopt the plan as a guide for subdivision approvals and capital improvement planning.
13.2: Expand public access to the Connoquenessing Creek in environmentally sensitive ways.	• Identify and map suitable sites for kayak launches, fishing nodes, and public entry points. • Draft design standards for access points that limit erosion and protect habitats. • Partner with landowners and conservation groups to implement improvements.
13.3: Collaborate with park agencies to enhance onsite amenities such as pavilions for gathering spaces, kayak launch areas, and install bollards at trail entrances to limit bike access for pedestrian safety.	• Collaborate with Beaver County Parks, PA DCNR, and local civic groups to add pavilions, restrooms, and seating areas. • Design and install kayak launches at high-demand access sites. • Install bollards and signage at trail entrances to separate pedestrian and bike use for safety.
14.1: Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.	• Conduct a township-wide walkability audit focusing on schools, churches, and civic centers. • Collect public input to identify unsafe crossings and missing sidewalks. • Rank projects based on safety, connectivity, and cost-effectiveness.
14.2: Apply for PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED grants to fund bike and pedestrian improvements and complete gaps.	• Prepare conceptual designs to strengthen external grant applications. • Apply for multimodal and recreation grants to address priority sidewalk and trail gaps. • Coordinate with Beaver County and PennDOT to align township projects with regional initiatives.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

Recommendations	Actions
14.3: Require a standardized sidewalk or shared-use path as part of all new developments.	• Draft subdivision ordinance updates mandating sidewalks or shared-use paths in site plans. • Adopt ordinance revisions following public review. • Monitor new development approvals for compliance with pedestrian requirements.
15.1: Update subdivision regulations to require open space or trail linkages in major subdivisions.	• Draft ordinance language requiring developers to dedicate land for trails, parks, or open space. • Adopt subdivision updates through the township legislative process. • Review plans to ensure open space is usable, connected, and maintained.
15.2: Encourage subdivision designs that preserve open space while allowing compact housing clusters.	• Draft a conservation subdivision ordinance permitting clustered housing with preserved open space. • Adopt ordinance revisions to enable rural-appropriate layouts. • Provide design guidance materials for developers on conservation subdivision models.
15.3: Require dedication of trail corridors or public access easements in new developments to link open spaces to the countywide greenway network.	• Draft ordinance updates requiring easement dedication as part of subdivision approval. • Map priority trail connections to guide where developer contributions should occur. • Adopt ordinance updates and enforce requirements through development review.

North Sewickley Township Implementation Strategies

IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGIES

Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Strengthen the Agricultural/Residential zoning district to discourage fragmentation of farmland.	1.1	1.1	1.1
Partner with Beaver County to expand participation in the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (ALPB) and Clean & Green program.	1.2	1.2	1.2
Establish a Local Agricultural Easement Cooperative Program to purchase undeveloped farmland and permanently protect it through conservation easements.	1.3	1.3	1.3
Adopt riparian buffer protections along Brush Creek and Connoquenessing Creek.	2.1	2.1	2.1
Identify, map, and work to preserve flood-prone and steep-slope areas for open space conservation.	2.2	2.2	2.2
Create a land stewardship program in partnership with county and regional entities to implement best practices for preserving agricultural and natural land, supported by outside grant funding.	2.3	2.3	2.3

Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Partner with the County and other municipalities to establish new road standards to limit curb cuts, signage height, and non-agricultural lighting in designated rural zones.	3.2	3.1	3.1
Partner with other municipalities to draft and adopt a tree preservation ordinance to require tree preservation or replanting for new development along scenic corridors.	3.3	3.2	3.2
Revise the zoning code to prevent cul-de-sac and strip development patterns in agricultural and open space-focused zoning districts.	3.4	3.3	3.3
Require new subdivisions to demonstrate proximity to or extension of existing infrastructure.	4.1	4.1	4.1
Coordinate with utility providers and PennDOT to maintain up-to-date infrastructure capacity data and service boundaries.	4.2	4.2	4.2

| Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Develop a multi-jurisdictional Open Space and Land Preservation Plan to identify long-term priorities, standards, and annual benchmarks for preserving critical open areas.	4.3	6.1	6.1
Permit small-scale contractor shops, farm markets, and agri-tourism in rural zoning districts.	5.1	5.1	5.1
Establish a streamlined tiered permitting process that allows low- and minimal-impact home occupations to be approved administratively, using clear performance standards and online applications to reduce barriers for rural entrepreneurs.	5.2	5.2	5.2
Update permitted uses in rural and commercial zoning districts to allow trades and agricultural services.	5.3	5.3	5.3
Establish performance-based site standards as part of broader Design Standards in the ordinance (e.g., outdoor storage, hours, signage) to ensure compatibility.	5.4	5.4	5.4

Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Establish a five-year review cycle for the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.	6.2	6.2	6.2
Adopt an ordinance requiring large rezonings to include a community impact assessment.	6.4	6.4	6.4
Work with other municipalities and the County to explore housing models that support multi-generational living, such as duplexes or co-located family homes.	7.1	7.1	7.1
Work with local lenders and partner with other municipalities to promote farm succession planning and land transfer assistance.	7.2	7.2	7.2
Amend the zoning ordinance to specify permitted accessory uses by right, including accessory dwelling units, to provide clarity and support diversified land use in the A-1, R-1, and CN districts.	7.3	7.3	7.3

Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Permit cottage court home arrangements in zoning districts near main streets or commercial corridors to provide middle housing options.	7.4	7.4	7.4
Utilize state technical assistance funding to hire a consultant to conduct a township-wide infrastructure assessment to prioritize needs.	8.1	8.1	8.1
Apply for Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel Program for environmentally sensitive drainage in rural areas.	8.4	8.4	8.3
Strengthen ordinances and enforcement to address code violations and nuisances and stabilize existing neighborhoods.	8.5	8.5	4.4
Partner with other Beaver County municipalities to establish a multi-municipal youth advisory or community ambassador program to involve new voices.	9.1	9.1	9.1
Publicize and simplify the process for joining township boards and commissions.	9.2	9.2	9.2

Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Develop a township newsletter and a monitored online platform to share updates and gather feedback.	9.3	9.3	9.3
Partner with other municipalities and/or the County and pursue grant funding to inventory historic sites and identify opportunities for their preservation, protection, or adaptive reuse.	10.1	10.1	10.1
Pursue National Register individual eligibility for key historic structures with support from property owners.	10.2	10.2	10.2
Establish a local tax abatement for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings, with permission from property owners.	10.3	10.3	10.3
Partner with adjacent municipalities and the state to develop design guidelines illustrating rural architectural styles and materials.	11.1	11.1	11.1

Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Provide expedited review and possible code standard exemptions for maintaining original architectural features in older structures.	11.2	11.2	11.2
Integrate historical compatibility criteria into the site plan review process.	11.3	11.3	11.3
Draft and adopt siting and screening standards for new buildings to blend with rural surroundings.	11.4	3.4	3.4
Support and promote school programs that explore local history and connect students with longtime residents.	12.2	12.1	12.1
Complete a Tri-Township Open Space Plan in coordination with Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan.	13.1	13.1	13.1
Pursue the installation of low-impact public access points along the Connoquenessing Creek.	13.2	13.2	13.2
Prepare a walkability audit and identify high-priority safety improvements, prioritizing community hubs and high-injury locations.	14.1	14.2	14.1

| Recommendation	Franklin Township Recommendation Number	Marion Township Recommendation Number	North Sewickley Recommendation Number
Apply for PennDOT, DCNR, or DCED grants to fund bike and pedestrian improvements and complete gaps.	14.2	14.1	14.2
Update subdivision regulations to require open space or trail linkages in major subdivisions.	15.1	15.1	15.1
Draft and adopt a conservation subdivision ordinance to encourage open space preservation in new residential developments.	15.2	15.2	15.2
Require dedication of trail corridors or public access easements in new developments to link open spaces to the countywide greenway network.	15.3	13.4	15.3

13
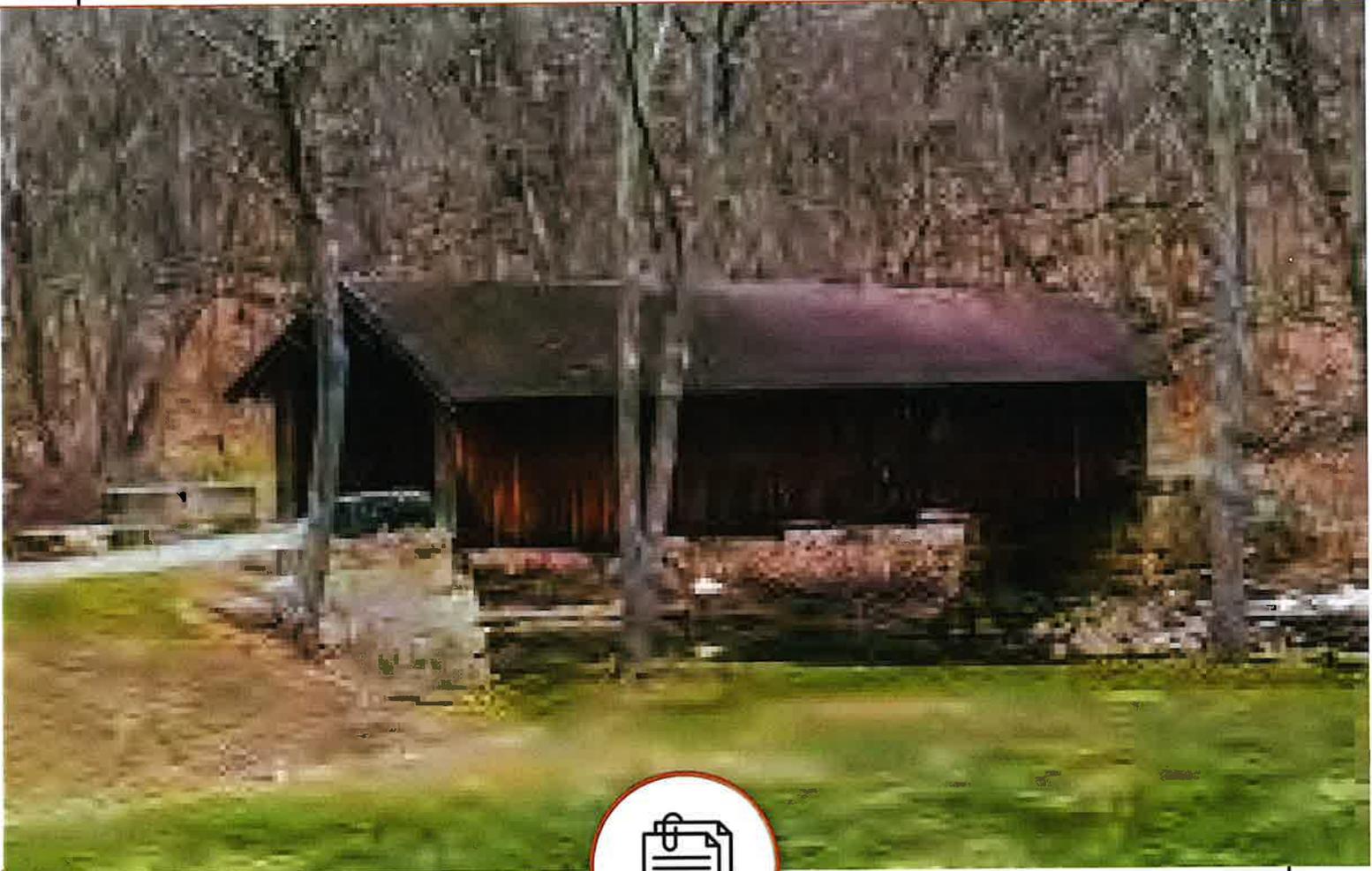
APPENDIX
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

North Sewickley Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Conservation
- Industrial
- Low Density Residential
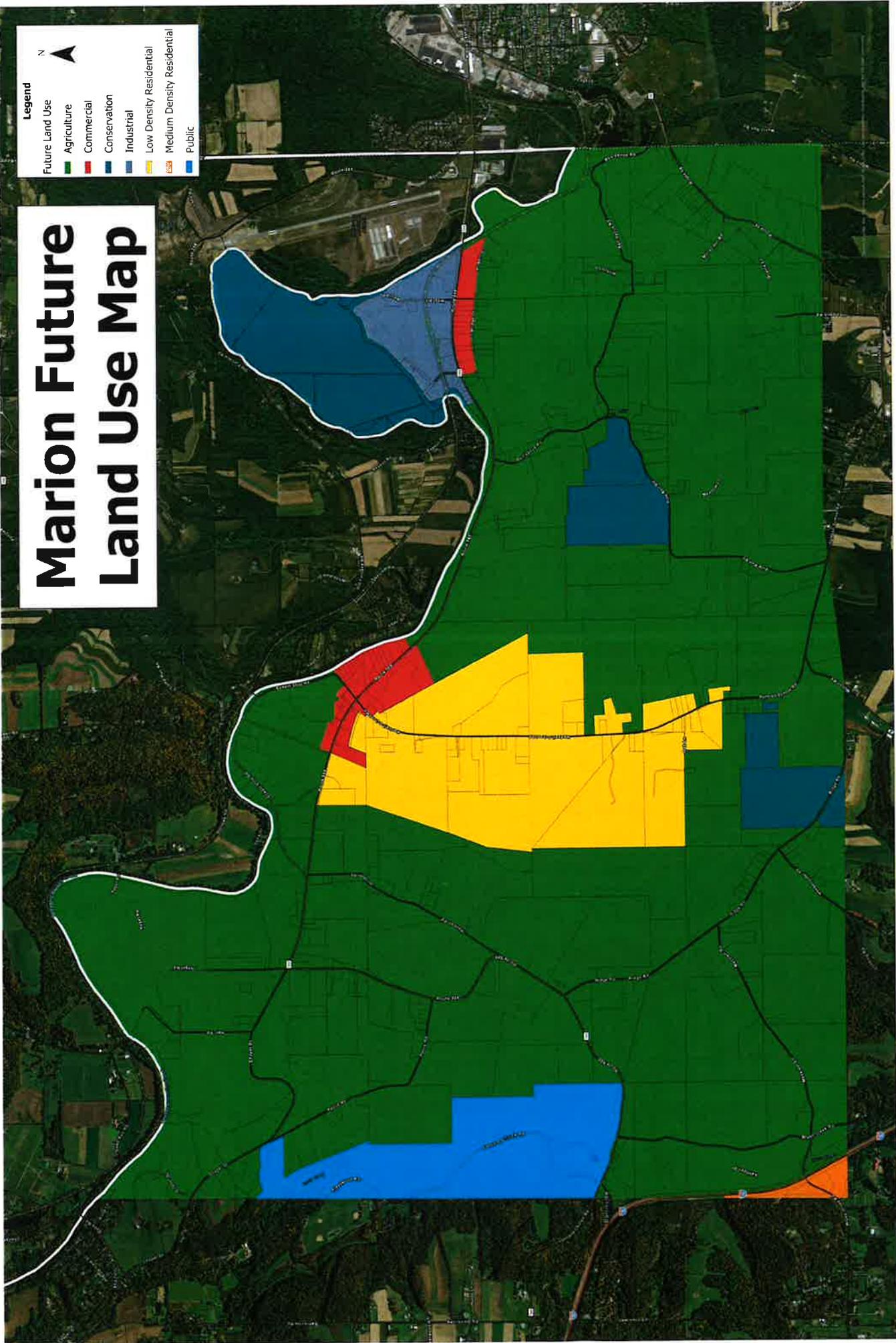- Medium Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Public
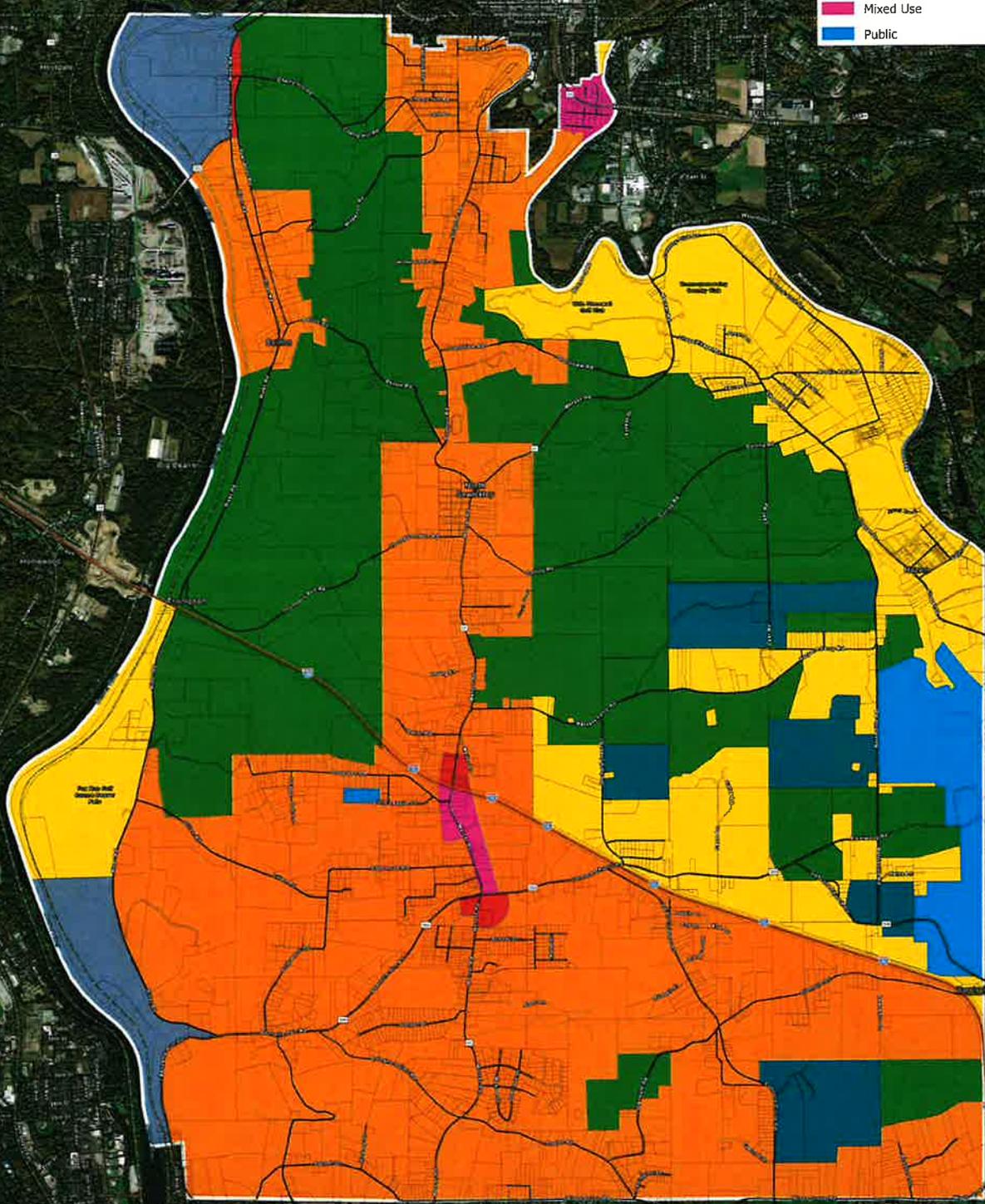
Marion Future
Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Conservation
- Industrial
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Public

Franklin Future Land Use Map

Legend

N

Future Land Use

Airport

Agriculture

Conservation

Commercial

Industrial

Low Density Residential

Medium Density Residential

Mixed Use

Public

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