
CHAPTER 1

PLAN PURPOSE AND PREPARATION

THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for the ongoing development of municipalities in Pennsylvania. The Plan establishes a foundation for land use and development regulations and a framework for policy and investment decisions regarding transportation, housing, municipal services, utilities, and natural and historic resource conservation. Its purpose in considering these topics simultaneously is to ensure that municipal decisions and investments are coordinated and complementary to the land use plan and to one another.

This joint comprehensive plan was prepared and adopted by Hanover Borough and Penn Township. Its goal in planning for both municipalities jointly is to analyze both municipalities as “the Hanover Area” and recommend municipal and multi-municipal action, as appropriate, to coordinate regulatory, service, and capital improvement decisions. This plan furthers current cooperative efforts and includes new opportunities for intergovernmental approaches to the cost effective delivery of government services.

For at least the next 10 years, the Borough and the Township aim to remain independent, cooperating municipalities. Consolidation as one municipality is not intended as a goal of this planning effort. There is certainly interest in operating efficient, cost-effective local government services and coordinating those services, one department at a time. If interest arises to consolidate these two and/or other municipalities in the Hanover Area in the future, a joint planning effort to discuss and evaluate that alternative would be appropriate.

AUTHORITY FOR MUNICIPAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLANNING

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended, authorizes municipalities to plan for the future using a variety of planning tools. These seven tools include the municipal planning commission, the comprehensive plan, the official map, the subdivision and land development ordinance, the capital improvement program, the zoning ordinance, and the zoning hearing board. The MPC also authorizes municipalities to apply these tools in cooperation with one another through

PENNSYLVANIA’S MUNICIPAL PLANNING TOOLS

1. Planning Agencies
2. Comprehensive Plan
3. Official Map
4. Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
5. Capital Improvement Program
6. Zoning Ordinance
7. Zoning Hearing Board

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intergovernmental agreements. Comprehensive plans are required for counties and voluntary for boroughs and townships.

Article III of the MPC requires that a comprehensive plan consider the many factors that influence a community's development. Comprehensive plans are to project future community and economic growth trends and recommend a future land use pattern, transportation and infrastructure investments, and community service improvements that accommodate expected growth while protecting natural and cultural resources in response to the community's needs. The recommendations to make changes to regulations, services, or municipal infrastructure systems should be based on studies of the local population and existing patterns and trends in land use, transportation, housing, community facilities and services, and natural and cultural resources. These studies should focus on the study area and pay some attention to these features in the surrounding area. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan should include strategies to implement or carry out the plan through application of other planning tools and public investments.

The MPC recognizes that comprehensive planning is an ongoing process—one that plans, takes action as directed by the plan, evaluates the effects of those actions, and plans again to address continuing issues in new ways and to address new issues that arise over time. The municipal planning agency is required to report its activities to its governing body each year (Article II, Section 207). The municipal planning agency is also required to review and, as appropriate, renew or update its plan at least every 10 years (Article III, Section 301(c)). More frequent review may be warranted in times of rapid development, redevelopment, or other community change. An annual assessment of the relevance of the comprehensive plan to current conditions would be appropriate to include in the planning commission annual report.

ISSUES IN THE HANOVER AREA

- Downtown Revitalization
- Traffic and Parking Patterns
- Economic Growth
- Housing Needs
- Infrastructure Capacity
- Community Service Demands
- Regional Character and Identity

In 2008, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development published guidance, *Creating an Implementable Comprehensive Plan*. This guidance emphasizes that the MPC guides the *scope* of a comprehensive plan but that its *content* should be determined by the problems, issues and opportunities that a community faces and wishes to address. If there are no concerns in a certain functional area, such as housing or natural resource protection, then a statement of maintaining current policy without any specific action, as long as consistent with county policy, would be sufficient.

The issues and concerns that the Borough and the Township wish to address are presented, analyzed and planned for in Chapters 3 through 10.

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THE EFFECT AND BENEFITS OF THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Joint Comprehensive Plan addresses common issues and opportunities with shared or coordinated approaches that are consistent, efficient, and cost effective. The Joint Comprehensive Plan in itself represents a cost effective approach to updating comprehensive plans of both the Borough and the Township.

Once adopted, the Joint Comprehensive Plan will legally enable the municipalities to implement additional planning tools, if desired, as provided by Article VIII-A and Article XI. Additional powers recommended by the joint comprehensive plan are outlined in Chapter 12, Implementation.

As a policy document, the Comprehensive Plan does not add, change or remove municipal regulations, procedures or standards. It may recommend that such action be taken to guide the development of a more cohesive and sustainable community. But it is only through the ordinance, budget and other approvals—not the plan itself—that the community’s quality of life will be affected.

THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ITS PREPARATION CAN...

- Engage local officials and community residents in a discussion about quality of life in the Hanover Area.
- Establish and prioritize needs.
- Provide a realistic projection of future land use patterns and propose one or more scenarios for a more desirable pattern.
- Form consensus on goals for the Hanover Area for the next 10 years.
- Identify best practices and innovative solutions to address trends and issues in the Hanover Area.
- Assist state, county, and municipal officials in their decision-making for projects and investments.
- Outline feasible areas for consistency and cooperation in land use regulations (zoning), infrastructure investments, and municipal services and utilities.

THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CANNOT...

- Establish or change land use regulation. Land use is regulated by zoning ordinances and maps.
- Require new standards for development and construction. Subdivision and land development ordinances regulate these topics.
- Determine what land will be developed and what will be conserved or preserved. Development, conservation, or preservation is a property owner’s decision.
- Determine landownership as public or private.

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MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND COOPERATION TO DATE IN THE HANOVER AREA

Historically, the Borough and Township have used their respective comprehensive plans as policy and improvement guides for community and economic development. The Borough's first plan was developed in the 1960s, after nearly 100 years of steady growth, to address the changing patterns of new development influenced by the automobile. In response to subsequent population and economic decline, the Borough prepared a plan update focusing on revitalization in 1980. After successful recovery of the resident population to near peak numbers and release of census data from the first decade of the 21st century, the Borough desired to explore ways to maintain the Borough's competitiveness as a quality place to live and work.

Similarly, Penn Township has been guided by a comprehensive plan and updates since 1967. Its 2001 update addressed traffic flow and safety, water and wastewater system capacity and proper management of on-lot systems, emergency response capacity and response times, recreation and library planning, and growth management, promoting development within the utility served areas. Following the amendments to the MPC made in 2000, the update emphasized implementation with "how-to" strategies and a directory of funding sources. The plan update was followed by a zoning ordinance update in 2004 and a variety of street and utility improvements that implemented the plan.

The adoption dates of these plans and the adoption and most recent amendment dates of the municipal zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances, are as shown in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Use and Currency of Municipal Planning Tools

Municipality	Hanover Borough	Penn Township
Planning Commission	1957	1967; 1979; 1990; 2001
Comprehensive Plan	1980	2001
Official Map	No	No
Zoning Ordinance	1961; amended thru 2014	1968; amended thru 2004
Zoning Map	1961; amended thru 2010	2004; amended thru 2009
Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance	1993; amended thru 2006	1990
Zoning Hearing Board	Yes	Yes
Capital Improvement Plan	No	No

Source: Hanover Borough, Penn Township

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In addition, the York County Economic Development Corporation worked with the Borough and the Township to prepare an Economic Development Study in 2002. The effort identified land use, infrastructure and community service issues that were perceived to impede economic growth, similar to a comprehensive plan, and made recommendations to address those concerns. Notably, several of the recommended transportation improvements have been completed over the course of the past 10 years.

A ten year update of the Study was completed as an Economic Development Plan in 2012 by the York County Economic Alliance. Furthermore, the Borough and Township have developed a cooperative relationship in providing public safety services, namely regular communications between the municipal police chiefs and more recently a joint fire chief. These completed items should be counted as successful implementation of an informal community improvement plan and as evidence of a successful partnership.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL PLANS AND REGULATIONS AND COUNTY PLANS

The Joint Comprehensive Plan gives direction to municipal regulation and other planning efforts. The Regional Comprehensive Plan makes recommendations to prepare, update, and implement the following municipal plans and regulations:

- Borough and Township Zoning Ordinances
- Borough and Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

The Joint Comprehensive Plan also recommends that the Borough and Township actively represent the Hanover Area in county and regional planning efforts. This participation would include supporting and implementing completed studies and providing input on ongoing planning processes, such as:

- Economic Development Plan, Hanover Borough and Penn Township, 2012
- Hanover Regional Economic Development Plan, Hanover Borough, Penn Township, McSherrystown Borough, and Conewago Township, 2013
- Market Analysis For The Hanover Area Heritage Conference Center, 2012
- ~~2025~~ York County Comprehensive Plan
- York County MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan, 2009-2035 and updated approximately every five years, and its Transportation Improvement Program, 2013-2016 and updated every two years
- Gettysburg To Hanover Trail Feasibility Study, 2010

Such representation may include advance announcement of new projects, contracts, improvements along municipal and county borders that promote desired community and economic development in the Hanover Area and status reporting of the same. Invitation to

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partner on projects with mutual benefits and completion of projects would be especially worthy of communicating to other government and community partners.

These planning documents were reviewed for their guidance and suggestions for community improvement in the Hanover Area. Brief summaries and potential applications of these documents can be found in the Appendix.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN PREPARATION

The preparation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan began in early 2013 with the appointment of a Joint Steering Committee and a scope of work to involve the officials, staff, and citizens of the Hanover Area in the planning process.

SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL PREPARATION

Preparation of the joint comprehensive plan began with a regional overview of demographic, socio-economic, land use and resource patterns and trends. Research and analysis of local issues and concerns followed, resulting in draft material for the chapters on downtown vitality, regional economic development, circulation and parking, land use, housing, parks & recreation, community character, utilities, and community services and facilities. Potential goals, objectives, and recommendations were discussed and revised as action plans for each topic.

PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The participation process included a variety of techniques to obtain input from elected officials, staff, and citizens, and build support for plan approval and implementation.

1. A Joint Steering Committee comprised of municipal officials, planning commission members, municipal staff and representatives of both the York County Planning Commission and York County Economic Alliance met throughout the planning process to oversee preparation of the plan.
2. Elected officials and staff were interviewed for their individual perspectives on community issues and goals.
3. Key person interviews were conducted with:
 - Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Downtown merchants
 - Major employers, including Hanover Hospital
 - Sports League Representatives
4. Articles highlighting the progress of the planning effort were published in the municipal newsletters.

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5. Press releases about the project were provided to The Evening Sun prior to each public meeting.
6. A planning project website, www.hanoverpennplan.com, was launched in Spring 2013 and maintained until adoption. The website provided a factsheet about the joint comprehensive plan, committee meeting summaries, public meeting notices and summaries, municipal newsletter articles, press releases, and contact information.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION

A joint public meeting was conducted by the Borough and Township planning commissions on May 14, 2014 at the Bare Center in Hanover. The planning consultant gave a presentation overviews the draft plan's issues, analysis and recommendations and welcomed general questions and comments. Afterward, attendees were invited to talk with the project staff about specific topics at various stations around the room. Comments offered after the presentation and at the stations reflected concern and support for the following:

1. Concern for traffic queuing on downtown routes near Center Square as a safety concern that impacts emergency response.
2. Concern for ongoing investment in Carlisle and York Streets with limited return
3. Concern for increase in truck traffic in area (particularly downtown) and potential increase in truck trailer sizes (beyond 53').
4. Support for a by-pass to remove trucks from the urban core area
5. Support for this, a revised draft, is a good guiding document; thanks to the project team and steering committee for its preparation.
6. Support for annual apartment inspection and ordinance updates to assist with deterring blight and allowing slum lords to let properties deteriorate.
7. Support for historic districts or neighborhoods to have consistent curb appeal. Need sign and facade consistency for businesses in the same districts.
8. Support for initiatives to attract young professionals to live, work, and play in the downtown area.
9. Concerned that the Borough is not committed to attracting businesses downtown and revitalization, e.g. with incentives and programs other successful communities have. Points to Manayunk as an example.
10. Support for other organizations helping to stimulate economic development and bring businesses downtown.
11. Concern for a proposed parking garage when parking is plentiful.

The Hanover Borough Planning Commission approved a motion to forward the draft plan to Borough Council on June 4, 2014. The Penn Township Planning Commission approved a motion to forward the draft plan to the Board of Commissioners on June 5, 2014.

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The Borough Council and Board of Commissioners held a joint public hearing to hear public comments on the draft Joint Comprehensive Plan on December 17, 2014. Comments offered during the hearing reflected concern and support for the following:

1. A vision for overall community improvement.
2. Interested in government's plans for its future.
3. Caution for recommendations that may exceed government's duties.
4. Additional suggestions on traffic circulation.
5. Objective implementation of an Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and rental inspection programs, if pursued.
- ~~1-6.~~ Annual review of plan status to keep the goals in view, and annual update to keep the plan current.

The Hanover Borough Council passed a resolution, adopting the joint comprehensive plan, on (date), 2014. The Penn Township Board of Commissioners passed a similar adopting resolution on (date), 2014.