

As part of the comprehensive planning process, Conewago Township held a community public meeting on June 12, 2007 at Conewago Elementary School. Approximately 100 residents attended the meeting. The meeting was designed to gain public input on several topics in the community including housing, land use, transportation, natural resources, community facilities, and economic development. Meeting attendees were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses or issues related to each of these topics. Participants were then asked to vote on the issues they felt to be the most important. The identified strengths were not ranked.

This information was utilized in developing the plan components of the comprehensive plan. The plan will focus on capitalizing upon, sustaining, or enhancing the identified strengths, while working to address or guard against any identified current or potential issues that are affecting the township.

In addition to the strengths and weaknesses exercise, residents had an opportunity to comment on each of the preliminary overriding goals. These comments were generally supportive, and were considered when drafting the final goals for the township and the supporting objectives in each plan section.



## ***COMMON THEMES***

After analyzing the results of the meeting, several common themes emerged from the items that were commented on. These themes are further described below, and are listed in Chapter 1. Raw data collected at the meeting, in the form of comments made by members of the public, is presented following the analysis.

- **Agriculture and the Rural Character of the Region**
  - In general, meeting attendees seem to appreciate agriculture and the rural character that defines the township. People considered agriculture to be a strength in the community and expressed a need to maintain rural development patterns. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential for additional residential and commercial development to encroach upon the farmland.
  
- **Route 743**
  - The Route 743 corridor received much attention under a variety of topic areas. Many people indicated that they were fearful of Route 743 turning into another Route 39, which has seen a great deal of commercial and residential development in the past decade. People discussed the need for turning lanes or traffic lights in certain locations, and indicated that they did not want to see additional commercial or residential development in this area.

- **Development Needs**
  - Many comments that were received at the meeting leaned against encouraging development. People indicated that they do not want more housing and they feel they have enough commercial developments. They do not want to see development encouraged and feel that there is a need to limit high density housing. They are also aware of the associated impacts that development brings with it, including impacts to the schools and transportation infrastructure.
  
- **Enhanced Community Facilities**
  - Many attendees indicated that they would like to see community facilities and services in the township improved. Specific concerns related to frequent power outages, improved coordination between emergency service providers, and an addressing project to ensure that emergency services personnel are able to find all residences in the township. Technological improvements regarding high speed internet access and the prefix of phone numbers were also expressed as items that needed to be addressed. Residents also expressed a need to know who emergency service providers were for different locations in the township, and a need for additional assistance for seniors.

## ***IDENTIFIED ISSUES BY TOPIC***

This section lists specific comments received at the public meeting on each topic that are considered to be concerns or issues. The comments have been ranked by the number of votes that each comment received.

### **Housing**

<b>Issue - Housing</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Concern over high or increasing real estate taxes	35
Do not want more housing	33
Should not encourage development	33
Need to limit high density housing	30
Maintaining rural development patterns	30
Need for noise control	12
Need for traffic impact studies in new developments	11
Concern with over-regulation	10
Need "fair price housing", where costs to pay for schools, etc. are integrated into cost of housing	7
Need to consider the impact of housing on the schools	7
Lack of apartments for people just starting out	6
New developments, lots too small	6
Being forced to hook up to water	5
Fear of having to hook onto public sewer	3
Security	3
Compatibility of new housing with existing	2
Need to be compatibe with surrounding municipalities	1
Impact of medical center expansion - threats on housing development	1
Need to promote a mix of housing types	0

## **Community Facilities**

<b>Issue – Community Facilities</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
911 should come from Dauphin County regardless of address	29
Consider locating a satellite police station in Conewago Township (Fri-Sun)	21
Funding services and facilities is a concern	20
Frequent power outages	20
Don't need library, parks, or walking paths	13
Making sure emergency services know where you are, addressing project	12
Shouldn't have toll calls within the township, why 367 number?	11
Need for township or organization to assist seniors/disabled residents in snow emergencies	9
Need for a community recreation area	9
Communication of who emergency providers are	8
Local police would increase taxes	7
Access to high speed internet	7
Need for better coordination between emergency service providers and jurisdictions	7
Lengthy response times for state police	7
Sewer capacity, Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy – new/more regulations require increased costs when increasing capacity	6
Need for a list of "contact info" for new residents	5
Need for local police	2
Need for transportation for seniors	2
Need for township website	1
Overcrowding schools	1
Need for walking paths	0



## **Natural Resources**

<b>Issue – Natural Resources</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Limiting commercial development	55
Preserve agricultural properties	46
Trash - junkyards and dumps	23
Runoff onto adjacent property	17
Coordinate pest control with Dauphin County	13
Control of deer population	9
Spread of fertilizer/sewage on farms	9
Tree replacement	7
Preservation of renewable resource options	7
Increase in coyotes	6
Invasive weeds/poison ivy	5
Preservation of riparian corridor	5
Pesticide usage	4

<b>Issue – Natural Resources</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Air quality	2
Steep slope development	2
No preservation of headwaters	1
Acceptance of new technology for natural resources issues	1

### **Land Use**

<b>Issue – Land Use</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Avoid high density residential developments	45
Farmland/woodland preservation	44
No Route 39-type land use for new development	39
No Turnpike interchange development	28
Control non-residential development	27
Avoid supermarket/strip mall	21
No village concept for new development	9
Lack of usable/adequate small-scale public park/pavilion	8
Don't want sprawl	7
Control "appropriate scaled" non-residential development	5
Harmonious development when promoted with adjacent development	3
Not easy to subdivide for family	2
Development not environmentally friendly- codes	1
Cookie-cutter developments	0
Lack of mineral rights controls	0
Long-term impact of new development on township	0

### **Economic Development**

<b>Issue – Economic Development</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Don't turn Route 743 into Route 39	52
There is not a need for more commercial development	30
Threat of commercial encroaching on agriculture in sewered areas	29
Influence of the Hershey Trust on the township	23
Fear of losing small businesses to large corporations/warehouses/big box stores	20
No nightclubs needed	20
Concern with "lighting up the night" with commercial development	14
Traffic generated by commercial businesses	6

<b>Issue – Economic Development</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Need to encourage people to support local businesses and local farmsteads	5
Need to think on a regional level	3
Infrastructure cannot support development / is not in place	2
Need for more commercial development	2
Increasing real estate taxes is making it hard for small businesss to survive	2
Economic development should not involve government (only business & bank)	1

### **Transportation**

<b>Issue – Transportation</b>	<b>Vote Count</b>
Don't want Route 39-type traffic congestion	39
Route 743 traffic is heavy	25
New developments overburden existing roadways	25
Speeding	14
Roadway conditions	13
Potholes	13
Tresspass on private property - horse, snowmobile	13
Winter roadway maintenance	10
Stoplight on 743 at Ridge Road	8
Tar and chipping	7
Problem with 3-way stop at Old Hershey and Ridge Road, should be 4-way	6
Lack of traffic lights on Route 743	5
Need 3-way at Roundtop Rd and Old Hershey Rd	5
Need 4-way stop at Colebrook Rd and Old Hershey Rd	5
Intersections visibilites are bad	5
Traffic enforcement	4
Roadway widths	4
Lack of speed limit signs	4
No turning lane on 743 in commercial areas	4
Colebrook (Turnpike to 743) road condition, width	4
Lack of bike paths	3
Heavy traffic/pass through	3
Lack of public transportation	2
Billboards/signs along roads	2
Roadways constructed to land use needs	2
Snowplow driver more responsible	2
Pro-Turnpike Interchange	2
Lack of cooperation/communication with PennDOT	1
Schoolhouse/Cedar Road conditions	1
New developments, money for improvements	0
Maximize access to state/federal transportation funds	0
Lack of areas to ride a horse	0

## ***IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS BY TOPIC***

This section lists comments pertaining to each topic that people considered to be strengths, or assets in the township.

### **■ Housing**

- Variety of sizes
- Well-maintained
- Historic Character
- Sparse development patterns
- Rural setting
- Would like to hook up to sewer on Old Hershey Road and Route 34
- Not a lot of cookie-cutter developments
- Location – housing shouldn't be on farmland
- Variety of development styles and locations
- Good neighbors, take care of each other

### **■ Community Facilities**

- Commercial and industrial development is limited
- Commercial properties are “family based businesses”
- Daily needs accessible within reasonable distance
- Limited number requires few taxes to maintain
- Conewago Trail

### **■ Natural Resources**

- Green
- Trees
- Wildlife
- People
- Quarry mines
- Diabase/Ironstone formations
- Quiet
- Nice folks
- Lack of heavy polluting industries
- Farming – best practices
- Wetlands
- Wind resources/energy
- Riparian buffers
- Historic buildings
- Farmland preservation
- Conewago Creek
- Forest uses
- Feeder streams
- Old cemeteries
- Agricultural
- Nutrient management
- Good, fresh air
- Open space
- Wildlife
- Good well water
- No light pollution



■ **Land Use**

- Large lots
- Few developments
- Farmland
- Small commercial corridor
- Small farms/good stewards
- Family farms
- No malls
- Buffer of disparate land uses
- Small community school
- No big box stores
- No strip malls
- No hotels
- Quietness
- Laurel Woods development style
- Agriculture/woodlands
- Open space
- Village (older style)

■ **Economic Development**

- Agricultural economy
- Small business centers
  - Character of community
  - Less traffic
- No malls
- Sewer on Route 743 will promote the economy

■ **Transportation**

- Winter maintenance
- No public transit
- Roadway conditions
  - Country roads
- No truck terminals
- No traffic lights
- No PA Turnpike interchange
- Low traffic on some roads
- No 18-wheelers on local roads
- Convenient access



## ***PRELIMINARY OVERRIDING GOALS***

Prior to the public meeting, the committee compiled a list of preliminary overriding goals by which to guide the plan. These preliminary overriding goals were presented at the community public meeting, and residents had an opportunity to comment on each goal. Feedback received on each of the preliminary overriding goals is listed below.

### **Community Character**

- Goal: Encourage and maintain the preservation and continuance of the agricultural and rural character that has defined the township, while enhancing the quality of life for all Conewago residents through improvements to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
  - I have lived in the township for 50 years and the quality of life has been just great as is!
  - Agree 100% (with the first comment)
  - I live here because it is quiet and rural. I treasure the wildlife and the peace. I do not want heavy traffic.
  - Please keep this as a priority. This is one of the main reasons we moved to the township. We had lived in South Londonderry and did not appreciate the rapid/mass development.
  - If crowded neighborhoods, traffic, noise, and expensive services are preferred, there are plenty of nearby communities where one could move to.
  - I agree with all of the above 100% - let us not turn Conewago Township into another Derry Township.
  - This is the foundation – we don't want to be like the Hanover Townships.

### **Land Use**

- Goal: Preserve the agricultural heritage of the township that allows for coordinated community growth.
  - I have lived in the township for 50 years for the country setting that it is. If I wanted it to someday look like Derry Township, I would have moved there.
  - Agree (with the first comment), we need to strongly preserve our country setting, not house upon house.
  - I also agree (with the first comment)! Couldn't have said it better.
  - Agreed (with the first comment). This is what makes the township unique, special, and beautiful.
  - I agree (with the first comment). It is a great place as is – so called “improving” of a community does not always turn out that way. Let's keep the character we have here!
  - I chose to raise (my) family here due to open areas; do not want to see this change.
  - I want to live in the country – not in town. I cherish driving to school in the morning where the only traffic jam is the “girls” going out to the other pasture.
  - Please keep this as a priority. We appreciate no stop lights in the township and the “girls” going out to their pastures.
  - YES – that's who we are – the Woods is a great example of where to build – not farmland.
  - Develop a board to preserve ag. Land preservation is more friendly on the tax base because it does not require services.

## **Housing**

- Goal: Provide a desirable mix of safe and well maintained housing that meets the needs of current and future township residents of all incomes and family sizes.
  - We already have this. Please no new housing developments.
  - Agree (with the first comment) – no more housing developments. More of such is not needed.
  - Agree – but designate marginal farm and wooded land for housing – not our ag based properties.

## **Transportation**

- Goal: Encourage a safe, coordinated network of roadways that provide increased mobility for residents, agricultural and farm equipment, and goods movement in the township.
  - I have a real concern with the speeding along our country roads, especially Colebrook Road. There are quite a number of residences and children living along our country roads. Too much traffic during morning commute – people from outside using our roads as shortcuts.
  - I agree (with the first comment) – speeding also on Round Top Road – running stop signs – difficult for kids to bike. A policeman was contacted and one morning passed out tickets.
  - It is becoming increasingly difficult to cross 743 anywhere during rush hours. Speeders are making it unsafe as they rush to 283 exits.

## **Community Facilities and Utilities**

- Goal: Support appropriate community facilities and utilities that adequately serve residents and businesses in the township, in a systematic manner that supports current and future development.
  - When possible, move power/phone lines underground (i.e. missed a good opportunity on Ridge Road to bury those lines). Power outages frequent from storms.
  - Will there be public water supplies available?
  - Township website.
  - No cable back Witmer Road.
  - Update electric – our power goes out frequently because we are at the “end of the line”.
  - Stop the insanity of power outages! Trim trees, put wiring underground, etc.
  - We need parks and pools and play areas for our children.
  - Community events – do we have any, how are they advertised?

## **Natural and Historic Resources**

- Goal: Preserve and enhance the Conewago Creek, and other historic, cultural, and natural resources that exist in the township, and support initiatives that promote education and increased awareness of the value of these resources.
  - Absolutely! Feeds the Chesapeake.
  - Parks/Rec Area?
  - Preserve the Conewago Creek – all life needs clean water.
  - Absolutely – what are the definitions of historic, cultural, and natural – could mean almost what you want it to.

- Development of a conservation/natural resources zoning overlay district that limits development in riparian areas, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, prime farmland, and recharge areas is key.

### **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**

- Goal: Utilize the adopted Conewago Township Parks and Recreation Plan to increase passive and active parks and recreation opportunities for township residents.
  - How about parks, bike trails?
  - What about permission for horseback riding trails?
  - We got D.T.S.A., how about connecting to Derry Township bike paths?
  - (previous comment is a) good idea!

### **Economic Development**

- Goal: Support the variety of businesses that operate in the township and those that operate in the region and provide employment to township residents, while sustaining the prevalence of agriculture in the local economy.
  - Need business for tax base, support business.
  - We don't need more commercial development or strip malls – we have access to shopping and our needs are within a few miles.
  - Need red light on Ridge and 743.
  - Need restaurants and hotels on 743 for Hershey (good tax base)
  - Would like more eateries (no taverns).