



Chapter 1 Introduction

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WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A GUIDE AND STRATEGY FOR A BETTER FUTURE

A comprehensive plan is a policy document that is both a documentation of the past and a strategy for future changes. This plan is a framework for the Borough to be proactive towards dealing with issues, needs, and changes that occur. It is both a guide for making day to day decisions and longer term strategic decisions towards a better future. The recommendations in the plan section of each chapter provide a wide range of actions, some specific and immediate, others more general and continuous. While the Borough may not be able to implement all of the recommendations, they represent a realm of possibilities, or a “wish list”, to which priorities are to be assigned. As the higher level issues are addressed, the Borough can begin initiating the remainder of the recommendations to provide further improvements to the community, or initiate them when the opportunity arises. The implementation strategy, Chapter 13, outlines these recommendations including the priority, method, and entity responsible for implementation.

The Kennett Square Borough Comprehensive Plan was developed to guide land use and redevelopment decisions by defining the policies on which such decisions will be based over the next ten years. The Borough has undergone changes as suburban development in the region increased.

Regional emphasis on the Borough as the focus for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses had decreased and the community was threatened with economic decline. To prevent this, the Borough embarked on a revitalization program aimed at strengthening the downtown. Efforts to protect the existing housing stock and maintain the historic neighborhoods were undertaken. These revitalization efforts have been on-going since the mid-1980's and the Borough has seen improvements in both retail and office uses. The quality of the housing stock has remained high and the Borough's neighborhoods offer a charming alternative to suburban sprawl. Kennett Square Borough has continued its commitment to an overall revitalization strategy and through this planning effort, is building upon its successes by identifying new land use and redevelopment strategies.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The comprehensive planning effort was lead by a Task Force consisting primarily of the Borough Planning Commission with assistance from representatives of the Borough Council, Borough Administration, Historical Commission, and Historic Kennett Square in addition to other organizations and residents. The Task Force met on a monthly basis to compile, analyze, and evaluate pertinent data affecting land use and redevelopment in the Borough. An issues identification exercise was held at the outset of the planning effort and provided a forum for the identification and discussion of key land use and community development issues. Members of the Task Force were given the opportunity to provide input at this early stage and thus shape the direction of the planning effort. A set of goals and objectives evolved out of the process that sought to capture community concerns.

The comprehensive planning process began with a review and evaluation of the Borough's existing physical characteristics and demographic qualities. An inventory and analysis for each plan section was conducted prior to a discussion of each issue with the Task Force. The inventories provided the data base or foundation for the plan element of each chapter. The discussions provided direction for the development of the plan sections and recommendations for each chapter.

Plan chapters address the following topics: land use; housing; economic development; transportation; community facilities and services; historic resources; natural resources; parks, recreation and open space; and energy conservation. Recommendations for each chapter were discussed in detail and consensus was reached on these actions prior to the drafting of the complete plan chapters. The full chapters were then reviewed by the Task Force in addition to Borough staff and other contributing members. The final chapter is an implementation strategy which focuses on the action, priority, responsibility, and method of implementation for each recommendation in the plan. Chapter 13, the Implementation Plan, can be used as an overview or reference guide for the plan.

PLAN CONTENT

The Comprehensive Plan was completed in compliance with the provisions of Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as amended. This legislation enables municipal land use controls in Pennsylvania and provides the framework for developing and implementing plans and land use regulations. It specifically enables municipalities to produce and adopt comprehensive plans and to regulate development through the use of various regulatory tools including zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances. Further, the MPC specifies that municipal or multimunicipal comprehensive plan must be reviewed at least every ten years.

The required contents of a comprehensive plan as specified by the MPC are summarized as follows:

- A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development.
- A plan for land use.
- A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality.
- A plan for movement of people and goods.
- A plan for community facilities and utilities.
- A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components.
- A discussion of short and long range plan implementation strategies.
- A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous municipalities.
- A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources.
- A plan for the reliable supply of water.

ADOPTION PROCESS

A critical component of a comprehensive planning process is resident input and participation. The Task Force consisted of representatives from various sectors of the community who collectively presented their issues and concerns for discussion and incorporation. They represented a range of views on land use, revitalization and community development, thus providing for broad input on the issues.

The Kennett Square Borough Comprehensive Plan was adopted in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). An initial public information meeting was held in February 2011 with a second information meeting to present the plan in May 2012. The public hearing was held and the plan was adopted on January 7, 2013. Both the public meeting and hearing were held pursuant to public notice as required by the MPC. Legal advertisements concerning the meetings were placed in the Daily Local News. Attendance at both the public meeting and the public hearing was encouraged through the means available to the Borough, including advertising on the Borough website, newsletters, invitation of community groups, and personal invitations.

IMPLEMENTATION

The comprehensive plan’s policies are implemented through various means by entities in an organized and coordinated manner consistent with local goals. Many are implemented through the zoning ordinance or subdivision and land development ordinance, while others are implemented through special programs, administrative activities and planning activities. The planning horizon for the Kennett Square Borough Comprehensive Plan is ten years.

The implementation table in Chapter 13 contains a complete set of the recommendations and indicates who, what, when, and how the actions are to occur. The recommendation describes the action to be undertaken (what), the priority (when) establishes the importance of the actions, the entity (who) describes who is responsible to implement or initiate the action, and method (how) describes what process, document, or other action will facilitate the action. The implementation table provides a summary of all of the plan actions in one place with cross references to the page where the action is located and described in more detail. (See Chapter 13)

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

LANDSCAPES2, THE CHESTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE POLICY PLAN

Landscapes2 was adopted in 2009 as an update to the original 1996 Landscapes Plan. Kennett Square Borough is located in southern Chester County, along the Route 1 corridor and is designated by *Landscapes2* to be in an “Urban Landscape”. The Urban Landscapes in Chester County are the historic population centers of the County. The intent of the Urban Landscape is to serve as the core centers of population, employment, commerce, institutions, services, and culture, using Smart Growth and smart transportation principles. The provision of public facilities and human services in these areas is appropriate to serve the higher population densities of the Urban Landscape.

This Borough Comprehensive Plan clearly recognizes and addresses the goals, objectives and policies found in *Landscapes2* that are applicable to an Urban Landscape.

ADJACENT MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Kennett Township

Kennett Township’s comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004. The majority of land uses along the shared borders are consistent with the Borough’s plan. For example, the residential neighborhoods and park along the Borough’s northern border and the industrial and commercial uses in the central portions of the eastern and western borders are compatible with the proposed and existing land uses in the Kennett Township land use plan. In those cases where adjacent land uses are less compatible, the designations on both sides of the municipal line reflect long term existing land uses. For example, the Township’s Specialized Agriculture and Industrial designation (the location of several mushroom properties) at the southeastern corner of the Borough is located across from a small residential

neighborhood in the Borough. While no changes are proposed at this time for the land uses on either side of the border, if the area in Kennett Township is ever redeveloped, the Township intends to take into consideration the residential neighborhoods and other uses that might be more compatible with this neighborhood. This same concept also applies to the Economic Development Area in the vicinity of Ways Lane north of the railroad and east of the Borough within the Township.

Kennett Area Region Planning Commission

The Kennett Area Regional Planning Commission consists of Kennett Square Borough, and East Marlborough, Kennett, New Garden, Pennsbury, and Pocopson Townships. The organization began when the Kennett Consolidated and the Unionville-Chadds Ford School Districts initiated informal discussions on planning issues in 1983. By 1988, the organization evolved into the Kennett Area Regional Planning Commission with the express purpose of sharing information and encouraging cooperation in addressing regional planning issues. A regional comprehensive plan was adopted in 2000 which effectively designated various areas of the Borough as appropriate to the existing conditions in each area. This plan remains consistent with the designations of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Kennett Square Borough remains an active part of the Regional Planning Commission, actively communicating and participating with member municipalities in regard to planning and development projects.

BOROUGH PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Kennett Square Borough Vision Plan

The Vision Plan was an exercise conducted in 2006 that included several public meetings and resulted in a series of recommendations. Issues addressed included items such as building heights in the downtown, the Main Street and Retail Use zoning overlay districts, and the Birch Street and Ways Lane areas. A number of the initiatives mentioned in the Vision Plan have been accomplished and the remainder are addressed by this comprehensive plan.

Kennett Square Urban Revitalization Plan (URP)

The URP was adopted in 2012 in coordination with this comprehensive plan, as many of the actions within this plan are incorporated into the URP. The URP provides additional detail including cost estimates and other information that is not typically a part of a comprehensive plan. For this reason, this Plan is consistent with the URP.

Kennett Square Borough 2010 Strategic Plan

The 2010 Strategic Plan includes vision statements for two periods, 2-5 years and 5-10 years, and a list of goals and more specific action steps divided into five critical success factors or categories. This comprehensive plan incorporates a majority of the actions from the Strategic Plan, particularly those actions that remain incomplete and are appropriate and applicable for inclusion in a comprehensive plan.

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