

Towamencin Township Strategic Plan

September 26, 2007

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ES-1

Executive Summary:

The Towamencin Township Board of Supervisors recognized the need for a Five-Year Strategic Plan during the 2007 budget process. In early 2007 the Board authorized the formation of a Strategic Planning Committee.

A committee of five residents, two supervisors, and the Township Manager was formed in late February, charged with developing a Five-Year Strategic Plan and the goal of completing it in time for the 2008 budget process. The committee expanded to six residents in mid-May.

The committee began weekly meetings in March 2007, starting with the task of developing a Community Vision and Mission Statement. They then received planning inputs from all Department Heads and the Township Manager. At the end of the input process, the committee developed Priorities, which were then voted on by each member of the committee for prioritization. They are presented in Table ES-1 below.

Priority	Subject	Category
1	Reduce Debt	General
2	Sumneytown Pike and Valley Forge Road	Transportation
3	Emergency Management	General
4	Increase Commercial / Light Industrial Tax Base	Land Development
5	Develop a sense of community	General
6	Parks Development / Master Plans	Parks and Recreation
7	Staffing for Township	General
8	Improvements in Information Technology	General
9	Old Forty Foot Road and Rittenhouse Traffic Signal	Transportation
10	Storm Water Management	Sewer / Storm Water
11	Crime Control	General
12	Towamencin Creek Interceptor	Sewer / Storm Water
13	Property Maintenance	Land Development
14	Overall Infrastructure	General
15	Equipment Needs (Snow removal, etc.)	General

Table ES-1: Committee Priorities

The committee then developed Goals, Sustainability Objectives and Implementation Tools and Techniques for each of the Priorities, segmenting them by areas of the Township Budget.

It is envisioned that the Five-Year Strategic Plan will be updated every year to maintain currency and change as the Township changes. It is also envisioned that the Five-Year Plan will be the basis for each year’s budget. Department Heads have been tasked to develop Five-Year Strategic Plans for each of their Departments. Those plans will be appendices to this document.

The Board of Supervisors expresses their appreciation and thanks to the residents who volunteered their time and effort in the development of this plan. The fact that there is no existing Five-Year Strategic Plan Template for a Pennsylvania township made the task that much more challenging. Therefore, they applied existing Best Business practices to this effort, and are to be commended for their creativity and innovation.

Members of the committee are:

Bob Fritz
Beth Hegedus
Bob Klein
Juan Lacomba
David Mosesso
Fred Seipt

1.0 Community Background

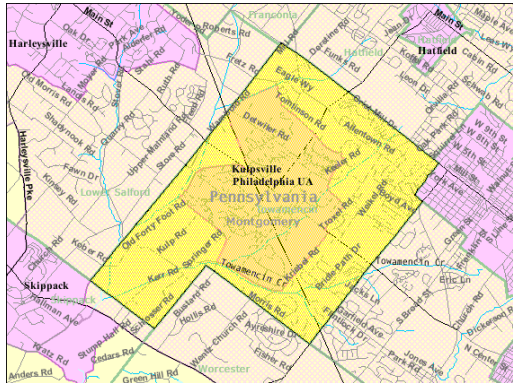


Figure 1: Map of Towamencin Township

The township began settlement in the 1690s and was incorporated in 1728. The village of Kulpsville is named for Jacob Kulp, an early landowner. The first grant of land in Towamencin Township was in 1703 from William Penn's Commissioners to Benjamin Furley on June 8. The Commissioners granted 1,000 acres to him. On June 17 of that same year, Abraham Tennis and Jan Lucken bought the property from him, and then divided the land in half in 1709.

The name Towamencin is of American Indian origin, and means "Poplar Tree". However, a legend associated with the name started in the 1720's when Heinrich Fry purchased some land near what is now known as the Towamencin Creek. On this tract of land was an Indian Village. The Indian Chief spoke broken English and one day observed two men clearing trees near the creek and said "Towha-men-seen", meaning "Two men seen." Apparently, the Chief's pronunciation stuck, as the legend goes, and is how Towamencin got its name.

In March of 1728 the settlers of the area petitioned William Penn's Commissioners for Towamencin to become a Township. The request was granted and a charter given. The land was surveyed and recorded, outlining the boundaries of the Township. Those boundaries are similar to what they are today. In the enumeration of 1734 there were 32 landholders within the Township, with William Tennis having the most acreage at 250 acres.

Typical of many suburban communities in southeastern Pennsylvania, Towamencin Township started out as a crossroads community. The roads first developed in the

Township were the paths used by Native Americans. Settlers expanded upon these trails to make the transfer of goods easier using horses and wagons. Small shops, the community school, inns, and roadside dwellings branched out along the crossroads of Sumneytown Pike and Forty Foot Road to become the Kulpville Village section of Towamencin Township. Sumneytown Pike was laid out in 1735 and became a turnpike in 1848 with the tollgate located in Kulpville. Forty Foot Road was laid out before the Revolution. The width of the road was designed to be forty feet, hence the name, and the width of this road had not changed much over 200 years.

Today Towamencin Township boasts beautiful residential neighborhoods, historic farmhouses, various parks and recreational facilities, and wide-open spaces. The community is a successful mix of residential, commercial and rural development and is home to many fine elementary and secondary educational institutions. Towamencin Township is centrally located in the middle of Montgomery County with easy access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike's Northeast Extension.

As of the census of 2000, there are 17,597 people, 6,872 households, and 4,810 families residing in the township. The township encompasses 9.7 square miles with a population density of 1,815.6 per square mile.

The latitude of Towamencin is 40.239N. The longitude is -75.33W. It is in the Eastern Standard time zone. Elevation is 226 feet.

Townships in Pennsylvania fall in one of two classes. The *first class* numbers 91 and includes the more urban townships located in the state's metropolitan areas; the *second class*, numbers 1,457, is generally rural. Towamencin Township is classified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a Township of the Second Class. The Township is in the 13th U.S. Congressional District, 24th State Senatorial District, and 53rd, 61st, and 70th State Representative Districts.

2.0 Community Vision, Goals & Objectives

Community Vision

Towamencin Township envisions a vibrant, livable, friendly, safe, economically viable environment, having well-balanced communities with a practical mix of residential, business, recreation, manufacturing, agricultural, services, and open space uses that are reflective of the region's historical and agricultural heritage. A network of greenways and trails that will connect community resources and land uses while providing recreation, preserving natural resources and maintaining open space. A safe, efficient, adequate, and aesthetically pleasing transportation network is desired. A friendly community that provides opportunity for its citizens to live, play, raise a family, conduct business, and retire. A Township that will strive to maintain a high quality of life for its current and future residents through smart development.

Mission Statement

Improve and expand quality of life assets and resources while protecting the natural, historic, and cultural environment of Towamencin Township in a fiscally responsible manner. To expand cooperation between business, agricultural, industry, regional government, and non-profits as well as neighborhood communities for the general welfare of all.

A proactive approach to land use management, preservation and economic growth while using sound land use procedures, planned infrastructure expansion and development, and consistent implementation of growth management techniques and best management practices is key to obtaining this vision. The Township seeks to build a sustainable tax base through expansion of commercial and high tech/light industrial uses at appropriate locations throughout the Township.

2.1 Community Goals

General

Goal: Reduce the debt to allow more flexibility in budgeting for other needs.

Sustainability Objective:

- In accordance with Act 209, maintain traffic impact fees.
- Maintain Debt Service mill levy at 0.807 mills.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Dedicate 70% of all traffic impact fees for reduction of debt incurred as a result of traffic improvements.
- Utilize revenue from mill levy to reduce debt.
- Work with Federal, State, and County elected officials to acquire all funding available for financing in whole, or in part, various Township projects.

Goal: Maintain a modern equipment fleet.

Sustainability Objective:

- Record and track all maintenance and operating costs for each piece of equipment.
- Utilize hours of operation versus mileage.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Develop a capital replacement matrix of all equipment in Public Works and the Police Department requiring recurring replacement or replacement based on life cycle and usage.
- Analyze the benefits and costs of expanding current equipment levels.

Goal: Provide all Township customers with a modern information and communication technology ability.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Integrate new technologies that help in efficient planning and project analysis.
- Maintain the Township's dedication to promulgating information to residents by way of the Township newsletters, website, public access channel, and pamphlets.
- Investigate new ways to reach out to Township residents.
- Advance the use of technology within the Township to improve communications, distribution, and access.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Work with Information Services to modernize the Township Web Page to give the general public the ability to access all permits and forms utilized in doing business with the Township.
- Develop a plan to begin the move in 2008 to maximize the use of electronic communications in place of hard copy documents where possible in order to reduce duplicating, printing, and postage expenses.
- Develop a plan to require developers and anyone making presentations to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and other Township committees to do so electronically.
- Begin the planning and budgeting for the implementation of a Geographical Information System within the Township.
- Develop a Community Calendar listing all monthly Township events. (Social and Professional)

- Utilize unused bandwidth of the Closed Loop System that supports the new traffic control system recently installed in the Township, for creation of a WiFi (wireless internet network). This network can be leased to businesses in the area, and made available for free use by township residents. The network can also be used to support police and safety applications.

Goal: Provide an efficient and effective Township staff.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Update and maintain the organizational chart including department responsibilities, functions, staffing, and compensation.
- Keep pace with the increased and changing needs for municipal services.
- Maintain a call action item database which will identify need requirements by service area and hours expended in responding to request.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Review as soon as possible all job descriptions to assure consistency in format, description of job requirements, lines of supervision, annual performance evaluation including strengths and areas needing improvement.
- Enable a staff that performs efficiently, effectively, and safely.

Goal: Maintain and enhance the existing Township infrastructure.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Develop a long-range planning and implementation process.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Develop a Five-Year Infrastructure Maintenance Plan for the upkeep and repair of existing Township facilities, to include priorities and estimated costs.

Goal: Develop a sense of community.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Be aware of the value of historic conservation in protecting local ambiance.
- Support activities and events that bring residents of all ages together.
- Investigate ways to develop a sense of community for Township residents.
- Nurture those community 'hubs' that attract a mix of residents, such as the township pool, parks, and trails.
- Support the vitality of existing neighborhoods and neighborhood conservation.

- Create new partnerships with community groups to establish lines of communication.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Return to a “Towamencin Day”.
- Expand the current Newsletter to a monthly format.
- Accentuate the positive.
- Petition our State representatives to approach PennDOT/ Turnpike Commission, on behalf of Towamencin Board of Supervisors, with a request to change the name of the Northeast Extension Interchange from “Lansdale” to “Towamencin”.

Parks and Recreation

Goal: Improve the Quality of Life Township residents have come to expect.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Support activities and programs that safeguard Township natural resources.
- Cooperate with County and the surrounding municipalities planning initiatives.
- Actively plan for the escalating demand for parks and requisite park maintenance to support all types of activities.
- Offer opportunities that sustain a healthy lifestyle for residents.
- Evaluate the needs of various age groups to ensure that the Township is serving and planning for the future of all residents.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, County, and non-profit agencies providing social services.
- Promote an array of quality community, educational, cultural, and recreational facilities and services.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Implement the Pool Phase II construction project for completion in time for the 2008 swim season.
- Identify, analyze, evaluate and prioritize the needs and availability of open space in the Township.
- Evaluate the recreational needs of residents given the changing demographics of the Township through the use of a survey. The survey will be tabulated and evaluated to identify priorities and realistic feasibility.
- Develop a Master Recreational Equipment Replacement Plan for those Park and playground items and equipment deemed unsafe or worn by the Township insurers and Park and Recreation Department personnel.
- Develop our parks in accordance with the Township Open Space Plan, the various Park Master Plans, and the needs of all of our residents.

Public Safety

Goal: Provide for the effective and efficient public safety and welfare of all residents, by continuing to make public safety a priority in the Township.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Ensure Township Emergency Management and Emergency Preparedness Plans are current.
- All required Township personnel are properly trained and equipped.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and County agencies to prepare and plan for disasters.
- Maintain roadways and necessary facilities during extreme weather and natural disasters.
- Continue a strong and proactive police department
- Support the Volunteer Fire Department
- Shield neighborhoods from the annoyance of cut-through traffic and speeding motorists.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Crime Control.
- Emergency Management Planning.
- Recurring training of all Township emergency personnel.
- Reenergize the Township Emergency Management Committee.
- Maintain the continued use of Selective Enforcement and Directed Patrol in those areas where Township neighborhoods are experiencing speeding and violation of the norms of courteous and safe driving.

Sewer / Storm Water

Goal: Enhance and maintain high quality sewer and storm water management facilities.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Improve the sanitary sewer system with annual upgrades as planned and necessary.
- Upgrade and maintain a Storm Water system.
- Improve the management and maintenance of Township sewer and storm water systems.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Perform a Storm Water management assessment in 2007.
- Perform periodic inspections of all Township sewers and storm water management facilities.

- Based on the Storm Water management assessment, develop a multi-year Storm Water Management Plan to include upgrades, repairs, and recurring maintenance.
- Replace the Towamencin Creek Interceptor during 2007.
- Develop a multi-year Sewer Capital improvement plan in 2008.
- Develop a multi-year Infiltration and Inflow Plan and provide funding in accordance with the plan.

Transportation

Goal: Provide a safe, well organized roadway system and improve the Township transportation infrastructure.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Carefully plan and implement Township road construction
- Reduce traffic congestion at problem intersections and secondary roads.
- Provide roadway safety for motorists and pedestrians.
- Work with the State and County in developing mitigation plans for management of the deer population in Township parks and reducing the danger they pose on Township roadways.
- Diligently enforce traffic safety rules and regulations.
- Maintain all Township roads, bridges, drainage systems, and other infrastructure.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Work with Congressional representative for Federal funding to complete engineering design of Sumneytown Pike and Valley Forge Road project.
- Work with Township Traffic Engineer to ensure turnover of design and right-of-way work on Sumneytown Pike and Valley Forge Road project to PennDOT in 2008.
- Complete right-of-way acquisitions necessary for the turnover of final engineering design plans and right-of-way to PennDOT in 2007 for the Allentown Road/Orvilla Road/Troxel Road project.
- Work with PennDOT to ensure 2008 construction of the Allentown Road/Orvilla Road/Troxel Road highway straightening project.
- Work with PennDOT to ensure coordination of detours and traffic lights for the PennDOT 309 Connector project.
- Work with residents, state elected officials, PennDOT, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to mitigate and remediate impacts to residents and the Township caused by the Northeast Extension Widening Project.
- Coordinate with the Turnpike Commission bridge closures caused by the Northeast Extension Widening Project.
- Coordinate with PennDOT a traffic light at Old Forty Foot Road and Rittenhouse Road.

- Continue to coordinate with PennDOT the straightening of Old Forty Foot Road at Hedrick Road.

Land Use

Goal: Foster Commercial and Light Industrial development consistent with community plans.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Ensure a more balanced economic base and increase the overall amount of commercial and industrial uses.
- Locate commercial development along transportation corridors
- Reduce or mitigate impacts on residential neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Continue to show leadership by exploring new and progressive projects that contribute to the exuberance of the Township.
- Be open to new development opportunities within the Township.
- Support the efforts of the local business association as they invest in planning and improvements.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Village Land Use Plan.
- Sub-Division and Land Development Manual.
- Conduct review of Township Comprehensive Plan as required by Pennsylvania Municipalities Code.

Goal: Encourage residential upkeep and maintenance.

Sustainability Objectives:

- Continue Township awareness to cleanliness, lighting, landscaping, urban design and public art by raising the bar on inspection and code enforcement.
- Encourage each neighborhood to seek its own identity.

Implementation Tools and Techniques:

- Develop a recurring code inspection of residential, commercial, and light industrial facilities in addition to the biannual fire, life, and safety inspection program.
- Enhance code enforcement.
- Utilize the model ordinances offered by the Montgomery County Planning Commission, along with the free help they will provide with updating and modernizing existing zoning and subdivision ordinances, or when writing new ones.