

Appendix F: Delaware County Planning Commission Review Comments

Concord Township Comprehensive Plan Update



DELAWARE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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May 18, 2000

Mr. John W. Cornell
Concord Township
P. O. Box 171
Concordville, PA 19331

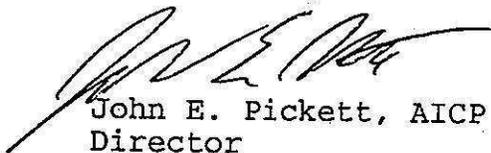
RE: Name of Plan: New Comprehensive Plan
DCPD File No.: CP 12-4907-00
Applicant: Concord Township
Recv'd in DCPD: March 30, 2000

Dear Mr. Cornell:

In accordance with Section 301.3 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the above captioned submission has been reviewed by the Delaware County Planning Commission. At a meeting held on May 18, 2000, the Commission took action as shown in the recommendation of the attached review.

If the plan is adopted, please forward a copy of the final text to this office for our files.

Very truly yours,


John E. Pickett, AICP
Director

JEP/hmg



DCPD

Delaware County Planning Department **RECEIVED**

Toal Building, 2nd & Orange Streets, Media, PA 19063 (610) 891-5200
MAY 24 2000

Date: May 18, 2000
File No.: CP 12-4907-00

TOWNSHIP OF CONCORD
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

PLAN TITLE: New Comprehensive Plan

DATE OF PLAN: March 29, 2000

APPLICANT: Concord Township

MUNICIPALITY: Concord Township

PROPOSAL: Replace the comprehensive plan of Concord Township with a new plan

RECOMMENDATIONS: Approval, contingent upon incorporation of the following remarks

STAFF REVIEW BY: Dennis DeRosa and Thomas Shaffer

REMARKS:

1. The Township proposes a new comprehensive plan to replace its current one which is dated February 2, 1988. The old plan as well as the new plan were prepared by Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.
2. Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) establishes criteria for the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The MPC states that a comprehensive plan shall include objectives regarding its future and address specific elements which foster the health, safety, and welfare of a community.
3. The proposed comprehensive plan is a well-written document. The plan states the MPC requirements and appears to contain all of the necessary components which make a successful comprehensive plan. The goals, objectives, and strategies stated in the proposed comprehensive plan focus on pertinent issues facing the Township regarding decreasing open space, loss of farmland, and homogeneous land uses which necessitate vehicular generated travel, leading to sprawl related development and traffic congestion. As expressed later in the review, the success of the proposed comprehensive plan will be contingent upon the Township drafting ordinance regulations which permit its landscape to shape the way this proposed comprehensive plan suggests.

C. P. 1

REMARKS (continued)

4. With regard to the future land use plan, the text indicates that a goal is to "minimize the future dramatic loss of agricultural lands." In response, the future land use plan shows large green areas where existing parks, recreational areas, institutions, and historic resources are maintained. A network of conservation areas is proposed to reinforce the importance of maintaining a healthy environment in the Township. Conservation areas are defined as floodplains, wetlands, and areas of very steep slope (>25%). The plan contains a map showing these conservation areas, which primarily coincide with creek areas.
5. The plan speaks about how a "traditional/neo-traditional town development" concept utilizing sidewalks, mixed uses, smaller lots, etc. could be an alternative option to existing clustering provisions, and that such a concept could be used to develop a Concordville Village District. The key elements which foster its success are stated below.
6. Such elements include a town center such as a meeting hall, community center, train station; a mix of uses combining first floor retail with second floor apartments and/or offices; a system of park squares within the neighborhood; a network of interconnecting streets which promotes through traffic; on-street/parallel parking which provides a separator between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, which promotes traffic calming by slowing down the speed of vehicles, especially along narrow streets; shallow setbacks to create an "outdoor room" two to four story buildings which are between 60' to 80' across the street from one another to promote a human scale relationship for the pedestrian as part of the public realm; front porches which serve as a transition element from the private realm of the building to the public realm of the sidewalk and street; sidewalks/crosswalks/pedestrian paths/walkways to serve to link uses, buildings, and lots together, which leads to an appreciation of the neighborhood/place; shade trees to provide an "outdoor room"; and other vertical infrastructure which includes fences, hedges, walls, street lamps, benches, gazebos, pavilions, pergolas, etc..
7. With regard to the village center concept proposed for the Concordville area at Routes 1 and 322, the plan states that this area would "serve as a focal point for various community and business activities, providing residents with a place to shop, work, meet, and interact, as its location

REMARKS (continued)

makes it accessible to all residents. The area would contain a mix of retail and office uses that would serve to benefit the businesses within the village center and would promote the preservation of the Township's historic resources. The comprehensive plan further states, "the village center would be an ideal "receiving area" for development rights under a transfer of development rights (TDR) program, thereby serving to preserve land in other parts of the Township. An important aspect of the village center concept is design standards to promote a "Main Street" environment where buildings form street walls and parking is located to the side and rear of buildings. Pedestrian friendly frontages can be created if vehicular service lanes are placed at the rear of buildings (just like many villages that were developed from 1900 to the 1940s)."

8. Although a "Main Street" environment is an excellent idea, it is not clear how the Township would incorporate this type of development into the existing area of Routes 1 and 322. These existing thoroughfares accommodate a significant amount of traffic. The existing thoroughfares could be used as "by-pass" type roads or new ones would need to be constructed. The existing roads would then be utilized as local streets with accompanying storefronts leading to a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. At any rate, significant altering to the existing landscape would need to occur in order to satisfy this plan's land use recommendations while accommodating high levels of traffic efficiently. The existing thoroughfare(s) and associated landscape would need to be substantially altered to create the many elements which contribute to a "Main Street" oriented development. The "village center concept" is an excellent idea. However, the Township will have to amend its zoning and subdivision ordinances substantially in order to promote this type of environment in the near future. Amendments to the zoning ordinance should include such things as mixed use minimum percentages without lot area requirements, zero lot line setback allowances, and increased height limitations. Amendments to the subdivision ordinance should include provisions requiring sidewalks, reduced cartways, the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian travel lanes, the planting of diverse landscaping materials, and the preservation of mature trees.

REMARKS (continued)

9. The plan speaks extensively about the transfer of development rights (TDR). As described in the plan, "the technique directs growth to preferred locations through the sale and purchase of development rights. The development rights are established for the specific piece of ground and then separated from the title of that property. The area to be preserved/conserved is the "sending area," and the area to accommodate growth is the "receiving area."
10. It further conveys the importance of identifying sending areas in the municipality which are to be preserved and receiving areas which will have higher densities. It stresses that a "market" be established for TDR by having a smaller receiving area than the corresponding sending area. The plan states that several municipalities have established the ratio of sending to receiving areas at approximately 2:1. Receiving areas will have higher densities than would normally occur under conventional zoning regulations.
11. The plan indicates that the "allocation of development rights" is the most important step in the process of TDR and that the total number of rights needs to be assigned to each parcel within the sending area so that the maximum density for receiving areas is not exceeded.
12. The TDR concept is becoming a popular tool to gain control over density and land use issues in municipalities. It allows developers their rights while also permitting the municipality to direct growth where infrastructure can support it and communities will reap its benefits. It should go without saying, however, that the success or failure of such a program lies within how it is designed and implemented within the municipality. The Township will have to draft a well-designed TDR program and substantially amend both zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow this type of program to flourish, positively shaping the municipal landscape in the coming years.
13. The plan talks about primary and secondary conservation lands. As detailed earlier, primary conservation areas are wetlands, floodplains, and slopes exceeding 25%. Secondary conservation areas are mature woodlands, wildlife habitats and travel corridors, prime farmland, groundwater recharge areas, greenways and trails, river and stream corridors, historic sites and buildings, and scenic viewsheds. The plan indicates that these secondary

REMARKS (continued)

- conservation areas are often best understood by the local community and that their protection is neglected through zoning regulations. The plan recommends that overlay maps be made for both primary and secondary areas and placed over a base map to depict areas that contain various kinds of resource areas which should be conserved/preserved.
14. With respect to transportation and circulation, the plan is well written and contains circulation recommendations for roadway, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle modes of travel.
 15. Page 8-1, Existing Circulation section, first paragraph: SEPTA bus route 202 service was terminated in March 2000. However, SEPTA bus route 314 service continues and was expanded in March 2000. It operates on US 202 between the West Chester area and US 1, Baltimore Pike between US 202 and the Conchester Highway, and the Conchester Highway between Baltimore Pike and Upper Chichester Township. In addition, SEPTA bus route 119 operates on Cheyney Road north of Baltimore Pike and Baltimore Pike east of Cheyney Road.
 16. Page 8-7, Intersection Safety Improvements, #1, Wilmington-West Chester and Baltimore Pike Intersection: We believe that a diamond-shaped grade-separated interchange (similar to US 1/PA 320), not a cloverleaf, is being seriously considered.
 17. Page 8-7, Intersection Safety Improvements, #4, Wilmington-West Chester Pike and Naaman's Creek Road: The timing of individual traffic signals should be based on the share of total traffic going through the intersection. In other words, if Naaman's Creek Road/Beaver Valley Road traffic constitutes 25% of the total traffic (202 plus Naaman's Creek/Beaver Valley Road), 25% of the total green time should go to Naaman's Creek/Beaver Valley Road, all other things being equal. All signals should have side street actuation, i.e., the road with fewer vehicles (the side street) should only have a green light when vehicles approach the signal on the side street.
 18. Pages 8-11 to 8-12, Cartway and Shoulder Improvements: C, D, E, and F should be clarified to indicate the nature of the recommended widening. Is the plan recommending adding travel lanes or just widening the existing lanes? There is a big difference between the two. Whenever widenings occur, bicycle lanes should be added. For I, Baltimore Pike, PennDOT is undertaking this improvement throughout the entire length of Baltimore Pike, not just north of Thornton Road.

REMARKS (continued)

19. Page 12, Other Future Circulation System Improvements, Bus Service: Not only would Baltimore Pike bus service connect Chadds Ford/Concord with Media, it would also connect with the proposed SEPTA R3 train station at Wawa.
20. SEPTA has completed the feasibility study for restoring train service between Elwyn and Wawa and has determined that it is feasible. SEPTA is including funds in its FY 2001 Capital Budget for engineering of this project and additional funds in later years for land acquisition and construction. Bus service connecting the station with Concordville, Concord Industrial Park, and work sites at Painters Crossroads will make these work sites more accessible to employees and the train service more accessible to Concord Township residents. This type of service would also determine demand for train service to Painters Crossroads on the Octoraro rail line. Again, bus route 202 was terminated in March 2000, but the Baltimore Pike bus service could complement bus routes 314 and 119.
21. Page 8-13, Pedestrian Accessways along Rt. 202 and Rt. 1: We strongly support this idea. Currently, State Farm employees cannot safely cross the street (Route 202) at lunch time to buy lunch, go to the bank, or shop at any of the stores in the Village of Painters Crossroads shopping center. They must drive their cars across the street and add to the traffic congestion and air pollution. The plan's recommendation should add the need for crosswalks, pedestrian bridges, or tunnels for individuals to cross the street for purposes such as this. The Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD) has recommended to PennDOT side-walks or trails along Route 202 and pedestrian bridges over Routes 202 and 1 at Painters Crossroads. In addition, densely developed areas such as Painters Crossroads (within the developments) should have sidewalks so employees can walk to other destinations in the area.
22. Page 8-13, Bikeways: A network of bicycle lanes on major roads (with the possible exception of Routes 202, 1, and 322) should be developed to allow residents to bike short distances (to the library, stores, schools, parks, trails, etc.)
23. Page 9-5, fourth paragraph: The second trail refers to the out-of-service Octoraro rail line, owned by SEPTA. It is not officially abandoned. The Township would also need to collaborate with SEPTA and Newlin Mill Park for this project.

Date: May 15, 2000
File No.: CP 12-4907-00

REMARKS (continued)

24. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is undertaking a land use study for the Route 202 corridor between West Chester and the Delaware state line and will be undertaking one for the Conchester Highway corridor between Baltimore Pike and I-95. DVRPC, the Townships, the DCPD, PennDOT, and SEPTA will work together to develop land use tools (such as zoning overlay districts) to manage driveway access better and encourage transit- and pedestrian-friendly developments. These strategies would preserve the capacity of the highways and PennDOT's investment in them as well as make transit service work better. We believe these studies and the resultant plan and ordinance changes will help to achieve the plan's goals and objectives.
25. In accordance with Section 306(b) of the MPC, within thirty (30) days after adoption, the Township should forward a certified copy of the comprehensive plan to the County Planning Department.